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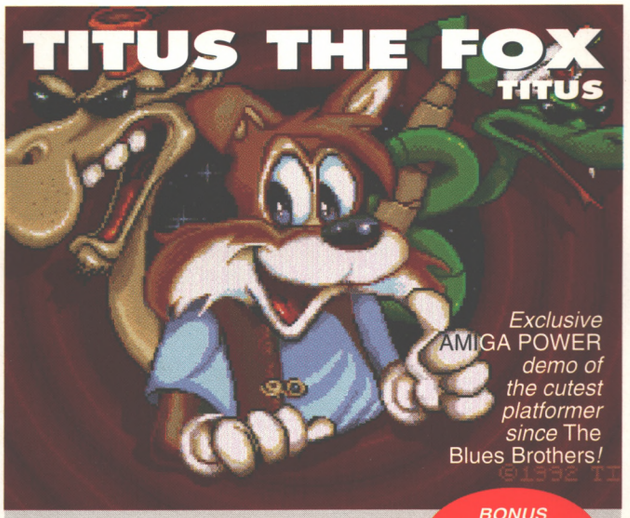
A MAGAZINE WITH *ATTITUDE*

AMIGA POWER

2 DISK SPECIAL!
DOUBLE DECKER ISSUE

TITUS THE FOX

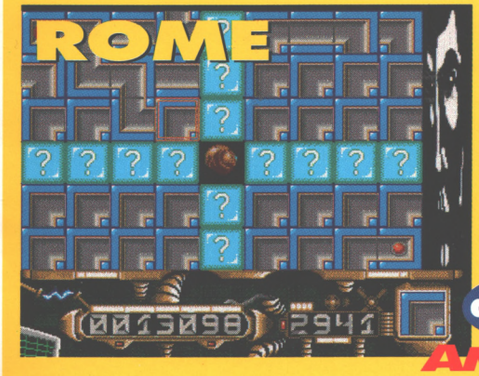


Exclusive AMIGA POWER *demo of the cutest platformer since* The Blues Brothers!

PROJECT X
TEAM 17
Exclusive playable preview of the best straight blaster in years!

BONUS demo DISK
AMIGA POWER

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DISKS, FLICK TO PAGE 5! →



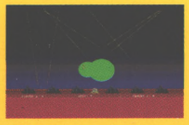
Gorgeous professional-quality puzzle game from the programmers of Puggles!

disk 12
AMIGA POWER

DOWNHILL RACER

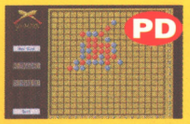
Fun on the piste in this seasonal ski 'sim'

MISSILE COMMAND



Classic arcade-based shoot-'em-up fun

GO-MUKU



Beautifully simple Japanese mind game

BUB'N'BOB ARE BACK!

But can Parasol Stars *really* top the brilliant Rainbow Islands?

PSYGNOSIS SPEAK!

Exclusive interview plus all the new games from Agony to Tomatoes

ISSUE 12

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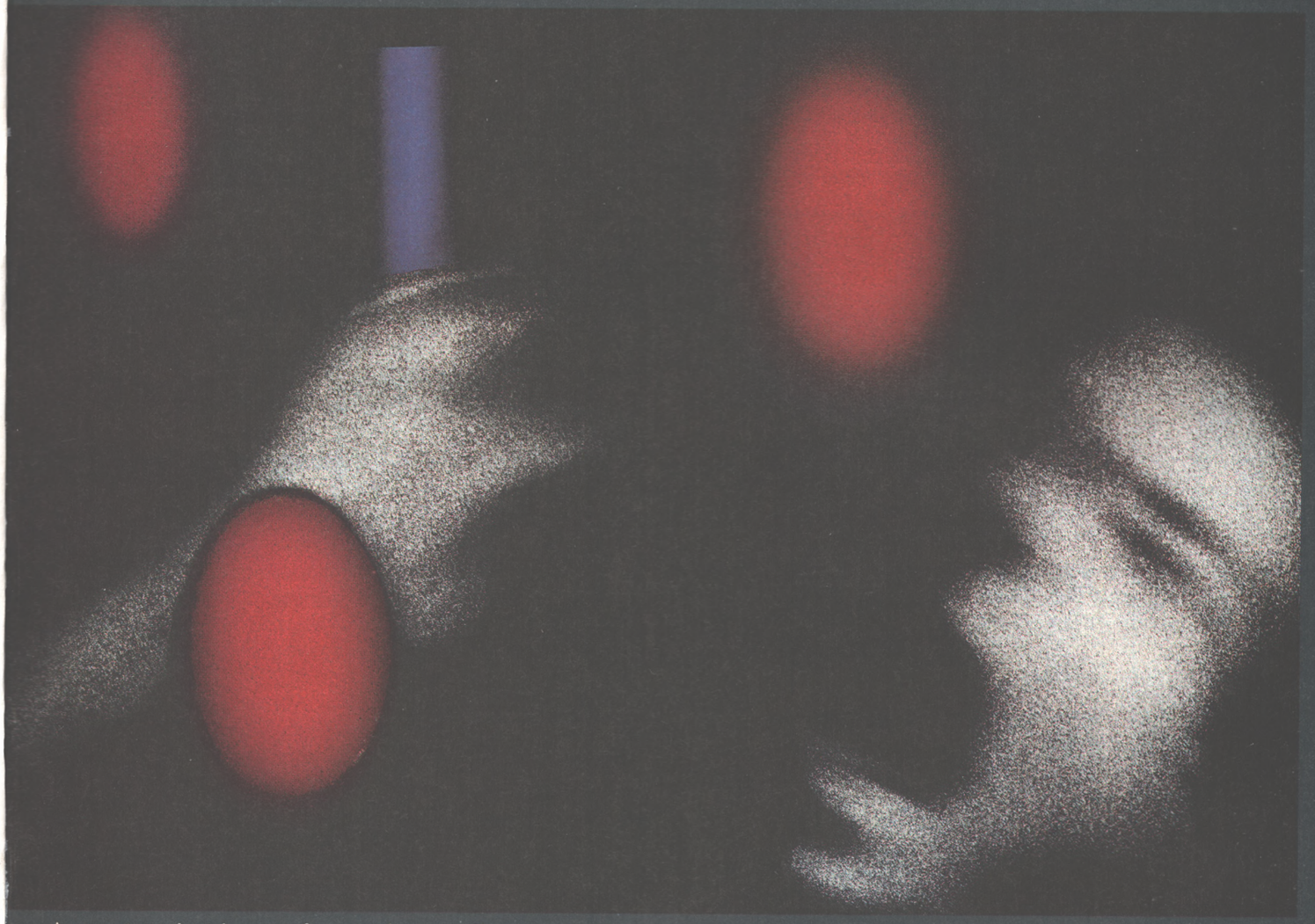

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AMIGA POWER
ISSUE 12 APRIL 1992

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SPECIAL THANKS THIS ISSUE GO TO: Joe Humphries for assorted bits of help around the office (hiya, Joe!), Asam Ahmad for putting the cover disks together for us, Hannah for modelling the AMIGA POWER T-shirt, and that's it, we think. (Sorry to anyone we've forgotten.)

AND IT TURNED OUT TO BE: A girl! So, hiya little Chloe Hodges, welcome to the world. *(Eds note: Chloe's mum, Kate, is an old friend of AMIGA POWER's, and we think both mother and daughter deserve a mention.)*

COMPUTER ARENA 1992: For those that don't know, this is the annual industry conference-cum-holiday, usually held somewhere exotic and the scene of much drinking and debauchery on the part of assorted softies. This year the ed was one of those who went along – the only journalist, in fact. Here is his report: "This year's venue was Cyprus, which meant a four hour flight and, in the event, various delays, a change of airport and all sorts – a bit of a pain, especially as there wasn't even good weather on Cyprus to make it all worthwhile. The actual conferances were good though – Mark Lewis, the boss of EA in Europe, and some bloke from Virgin retail putting in particularly impressive performances. I'd tell you about the drinking too, but sorry – no room."

AMIGA POWER comes to you from Future Publishing, home of Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper, ST Format, PC Format, Your Sinclair, Commodore Format, Amstrad Action, Sega Power, Total!, Public Domain, Mountain Biking UK, Cycling Plus, Photo Plus, Classic CD and more.

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10 TRUE STORIES
All the news that's fit to print, from Core's new *Jaguar XJ220* game to *John Barnes, B-17*, the ECTS Award nominations, *Race Drivin'* and more! Plus! Win air show tickets, join us at the Amiga Shopper show, and enjoy the last – yes, last! – Oh Dear...!

16 THE CHARTS
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41 COMPLETE CONTROL
More tips than you'll find anywhere! This month we have the final parts of our *Knights Of The Sky* and *Another World* guides, alongside hint'n'cheats on *Formula One Grand Prix, Railroad Tycoon, The Godfather, Leander, Birds Of Prey, WWF Wrestlemania, Celtic Legends, Populous 2, Robocod, Robin Hood* and more. Plus! The Last Resort (with Jonathan Davies) – our brand new help column – *really* gets going. If you've got a problem with a game, this is the place to come...

54 YOU BOUGHT *WHAT..?*
Why on earth did you actually buy that game? It's a question most of us have asked ourselves at one time or another – and here's where we find the answers. Well, *some* of them anyway...

70 DIARY OF A GAME
Work continues apace on Sensible's *Mega lo Mania II*, and here's programmer David 'Ubik' Korn to tell us all about it...

73 NEXT MONTH
...we'll have the best issue of AMIGA POWER yet! Flick to this page for the incredible reasons why.

97 DO THE WRITE THING
Your letters come over all serious this month, with Commodore, software prices and more all on the agenda. Plus! Bumper 'And another thing' special!

101 THE BOTTOM LINE
Eight pages of unmissable reviews of the past year's best (and worst) games. If it's not here, it's not been released! (Well, almost...)

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Subscribe to AMIGA POWER here. Plus! T-shirts, binders, those elusive back issues and more!

114 AMIGA UNIVERSE
Our complete handbook to every major character to appear on the Amiga continues. This month: my name is Pond, James Pond.

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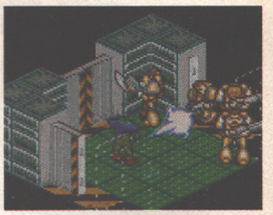

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Or *Airborne Ranger* revisited... Page 32

ORK
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A cartoon game with gameplay? Page 38

59 YEAR OF THE O

Psygnosis – the highly respected 16-bit specialists – never talk to the press. Or at least, they never used to. Mark Ramshaw reports:

- **All the new games! They're some of the most exciting of the year, and you read about them here first! (Page 59)**
- **The first ever CD-based game to use the medium to its full advantage – and then some – *Microcosm*. (Page 66)**
- **Plus! Psygnosis boss Ian Hetherington speaks! (Page 62)**

92 DEFINITION OF SOUND: THE BEAT-'EM-UPS

AMIGA POWER's complete buyer's guide series reaches that most maligned of genres, the straight fighting game. We lea you past the dross, uncovering a few gems along the way.

OVER 300
GAMES RATED IN EVERY ISSUE!

MONTH

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Better than *The Blues Brothers*! Page 30

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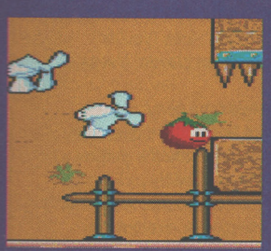
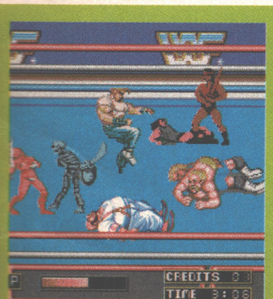
OWL





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TWO DISKs!

This month we've got a special treat for you – two disks worth of treat, in fact! Check out the next page for full instructions...

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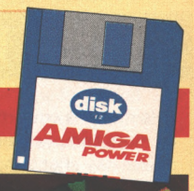
EXTRA BONUS DISK



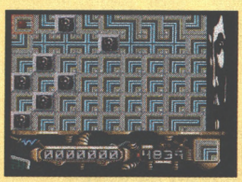
TITUS THE FOX

Quite simply the cutest computer game character we've seen all year. Here he is in a brand-new, never-seen-in-the-game level – it's blooming hard, but Titus himself is so loveable you'll forgive all.

PROJECT X

There are shoot-'em-ups and there are shoot-'em-ups and then there's *Project X*. Even if you don't like blasting games, you'll like this one..!

AND THIS IS DISK 12

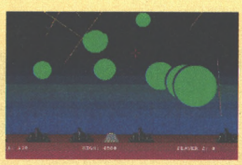


ROME

From *Puggles* creators The Hidden comes this new puzzle game. Create a path to guide your marble to safety against time – it's big, brain-teasing and brill!

DOWNHILL CHALLENGE

Simple, but still simply fabby – it's this surprisingly tricky downhill ski 'sim'.

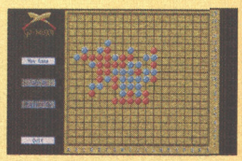


MISSILE COMMAND

Ancient arcade classic of absolutely stupendous addictiveness. They don't make them like this any more, oh no. (Except they quite obviously do...)

GO-MOKU

This version of the ancient oriental board game looks, as they all do, incredibly simple. You'll agree – until you try beating the devious little swine!



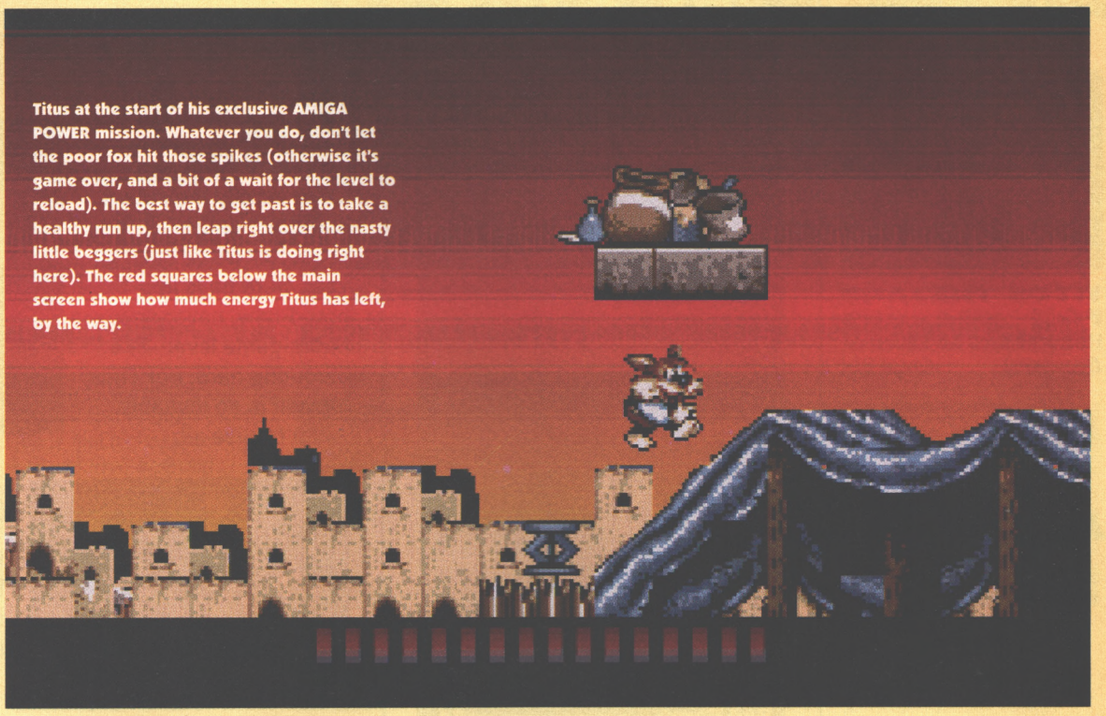
GOT A FAULTY DISK?

It's not very likely, but it *does* happen. If so, send your faulty disk – enclosing a note clearly stating what you think's wrong with it – to Disk Copy Labs plc, Unit A, West March, London Road, Daventry NN4 4SA, NOT to us at AMIGA POWER.

disk 12

TITUS THE FOX

Authors: Titus



Titus at the start of his exclusive AMIGA POWER mission. Whatever you do, don't let the poor fox hit those spikes (otherwise it's game over, and a bit of a wait for the level to reload). The best way to get past is to take a healthy run up, then leap right over the nasty little beggers (just like Titus is doing right here). The red squares below the main screen show how much energy Titus has left, by the way.

STOP! READ THIS FIRST!

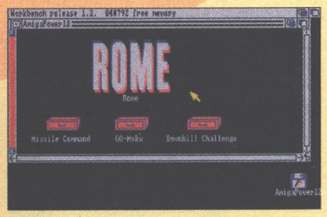
This month's cover disks are just a bit more complicated than usual, so please pay attention.

1. Make sure that you've switched off your Amiga, removed all peripherals, and plugged a joystick into Joystick Port Two and a mouse in Joystick Port One.
2. If you want to play Titus or Project X then, insert the appropriate disk, switch the Amiga on and waiting for the menu to load. Then:

IF YOU OWN A500 or other non-Plus model, then simply press the appropriate function key F1 for Titus, or F2 for Project-X. After a short while the correct program will load.

IF YOU OWN AN A500PLUS then press the left mouse button. The menu screen will disappear. Type MAIN (Return) to play Titus, or PROJECTX (Return) to play Project X. Sorry about the inconvenience and all that, but the program should then load without any further problems.

3. If you want to play one of the PD games, then insert the appropriate disk and switch on your Amiga. A workbench screen ought to appear. Double click on the disk icon (with the left mouse button). The screen should look like this:



It's then simply a matter of double-clicking on whichever piece of top PD software you want to play.

4. Enjoy!

PROBLEMS?

If either of the disks fails to work:

1. Try the whole process again.
2. If that doesn't work, try repairing the disk with Disk Doctor – supplied with your machine.
3. If you still aren't having any luck, then don't worry. Place the offending disk in a jiffy bag, along with an explanatory letter, saying WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE DISK and return it (complete with an SAE) to this address: AMIGA POWER Disk 12 Returns, Disk Copy Labs plc, Unit A, West March, London Road, Daventry NN4 4SA. Give them 28 days or so and they should get a working one back to you.

ROME

Authors: The Hidden

I HAVE A FWIEND IN WOME

So many of you wrote to say you loved our issue nine coverdisk game *Puggles* by top new programming talents The Hidden, that we thought we'd better give them a quick call and see what else they could come up with for us. The conversation went something like this:

(Bring, bring). "Hello?"

Oh, hello Mrs Hidden, are the boys in?

"Ooh yes love, hang on and I'll get them for you..."

Hi there, The Hidden, it's AMIGA POWERagain. The kids loved that fabby little *Puggles* game of yours we ran on the disk a couple of months ago, and we wondered if you had anything similar for our next gorgeous double-disk issue?

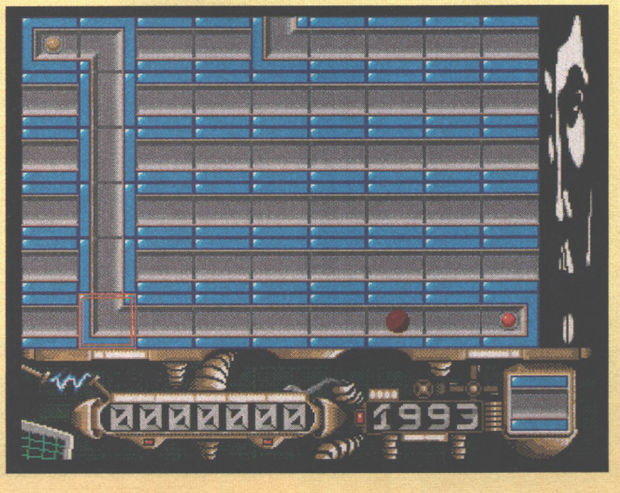
"Well, AMIGA POWER, I'm sure we could manage that. How would some kind of dinky little tile-shuffling puzzle game scenario sound to you?"

Like the peals of the very bells of Heaven, The Hidden.

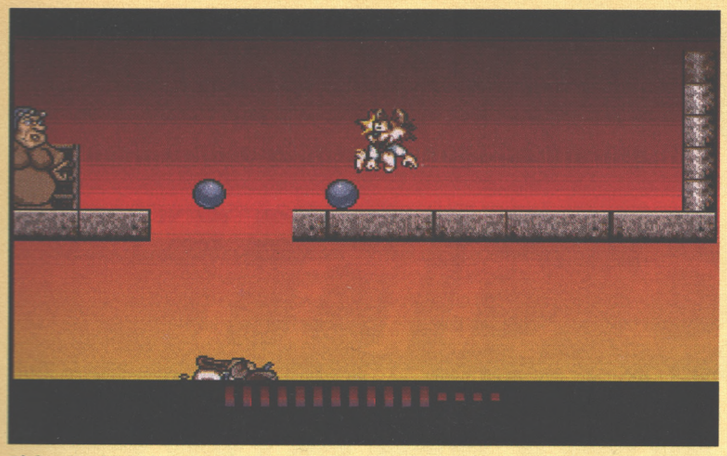
"Okey-dokey, then. We've got a notion to write a game of that very description right now. The concept we've been batting around is one of a nasty chap called Cardinal Creep having released a powerful bomb which will destroy the world. Unfortunately, you, the player, are the only person who knows of his plan, so you have to try to stop him by safely guiding the bomb through a maze of pathways within a time limit. If you fail, the bomb will fall from the skies (you're playing sort of up in the clouds, y'see) and that'll be that."

Hmm, sounds a bit easy.

"Ah yes, but here's the clever stuff. You actually have to create the pathway through the maze yourself by picking up tiles and moving them around. Also, the Cardinal is watching your every move (note his eyes spookily following you from the side of the screen) and has despatched his creepy minions to try and hamper your progress. They appear intermittently on the screen and fire lasers of different colours which have varying effects on you, from reversing the joystick controls to releasing the ball whether you've finished creating the pathway or not (though luckily, some of the minions are rebellious and will actually help you out with bonus points or timer resets). On later levels there are also immovable, impassable blocks and the tiles are fiendishly designed so as to play funny



From the team who brought you the excellent *Puggles*, comes *Rome* – a puzzling game for people with a shortage of marbles.



Right near the end of the mission, Titus tries to beat the fat lady with a couple of handy bowling balls. My, they sure do bounce a lot – this could be harder than it looks.

Isn't he just adorable, though? It has to be said, we haven't fallen so in love with a computer game character since Kiki from *Gem'X* charmed us all into submission in issue one. *Titus The Fox*'s indomitable spirit and unquenchably cheeky grin are just two of the things which look set to make this gorgeous platform romp one of the top games of 1992.

TITUS – HE'S GOT THE POWER

In this exclusive, not-found-anywhere-in-the-real-thing demo, our be-brushed hero has to rescue one of his vulpine buddies from the clutches of a nasty Arabian woman (the game's largely based around Marrakech, y'see), with only some old bones, a few crates of petrol, a magic carpet and a couple of hard rubber balls to assist him. Can he possibly manage it? Only with your help...

Fans of Titus' previous classic platformer *The Blues Brothers* will feel right at home with this game, but there are a couple of little extra tweaks in the control too, so pay attention. For one thing, you're not limited to throwing objects at the bad guys – you can also throw other bad guys at them! To use this pleasingly ironic method of attack, simply wait until an enemy is very close to Titus, then quickly hit the fire button and down on the joystick at the same time. The bemused baddie will then find himself hoisted aloft by our foxy friend, and ripe for hurling at one of the other nasties when ammo is short. (You control the direction of throwing with the joystick, so you're not limited to taking out bad guys straight in front of you either, remember.) Secondly, if and when you come across the magic carpet, to use it you need to pick it up, throw it away, then jump on it as it hovers in the air. It'll then zip off in a downwards direction, but you can still exert left/right control over it as it descends, before hopping off in mid-air or when you come into contact with a solid surface.

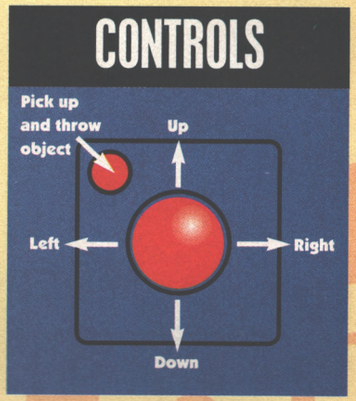
ABOUT AS CUNNING AS THEY COME

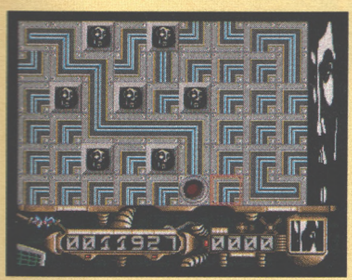
And that's, in traditional style, about it, except to say that if the blinding speed gets a bit much for you, you can always hit the F10 key and slow everything down to about half as fast. Then again, if you decide that you're not a total soft boy after all, you can always hit F10 again to restore things to their proper state. Oh, yeah, and you only get one life, so be extra careful not to die on the spikes right at the start, or you'll have to sit through the lengthy loading all over again and get a bit annoyed.

But don't worry – if the frustration gets to you (this is a tough demo and no mistake), just take a look at that fluffy, trusting little face and beaming smile and ask yourself, "Can I let such a cute little character down now?" Don't be daft. 'Cos that'd make you daft as a brush. Sorry.

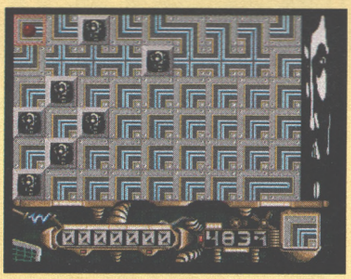
CONTROLS

Down and fire - put down held object
F10 - change game speed. ●





Playing *Rome* the right way – the ball moves along the route quite nicely.



Playing *Rome* the wrong way – Help! I can't get the pipes to join up!

tricks on your mind and make things tougher still."

Yikes. When you put it like that, it sounds a lot trickier.

"Mmm, but we're going to put a password system in so that it doesn't get too frustrating. We're nice that way."

Very fair. So that's all there is to it, then?

"Yup, pretty much. We think we might stick in a slightly pretentious but kinda sweet end screen and some suitably eeire music too, but that's more or less the size of it."

Right then. Can you have it with us by lunchtime yesterday?

"No problem."

Oh, and just for the disk label, what's it going to be called?

"*Rome*."

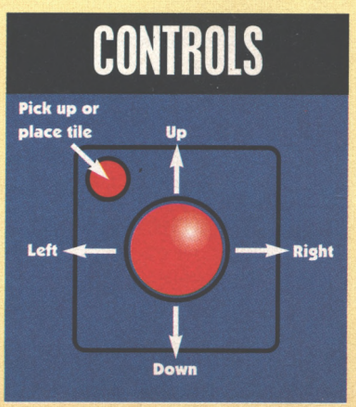
Rome?

"Yes, *Rome*. You have a problem with that?"

Um, no. No problem at all...

CONTROLS

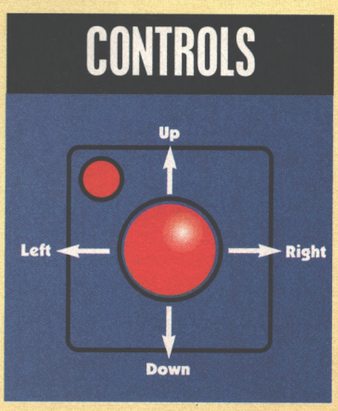
Return - start ball rolling
P - pause (displays instruction summary)
Esc - quits current game
Enter password by selecting letters with joystick and pressing fire when finished.●



DOWNHILL CHALLENGE

Slick, simple – and above all – fun. What more could you want?

This month in Senile Speccy Game Corner we've got, basically, *Horace Goes Skiing*. Take control of a little chappy on skis and guide him safely to the bottom of a terrifying mountain strewn with trees, flags and obstacles. Use the joystick to go left, right, faster or slower, and press the fire button to leap over rocks and fallen branches. There's only one course, but it's a long and tricky one, and it'll take you a long time to complete it properly (ie collecting all the flags), so stop complaining at the back there. Want to know more? Then check out the doc file on the disk for more info. ●

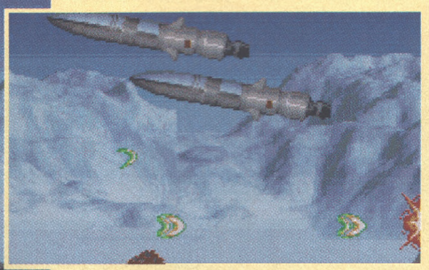


disk 12

PROJECT X

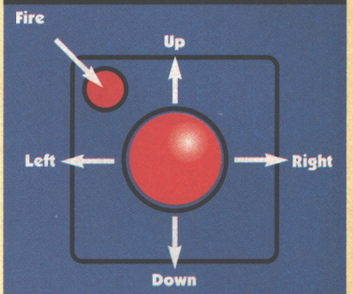
Authors: Team 17

It hardly seems possible, we grant you, but even after *Titus The Fox* and *Rome*, we've still got more brilliant stuff for you this month. *Project X* (as previewed in True Stories last month) is the new shoot-'em-up from Team 17, authors of *Alien Breed*, and it's bloody gorgeous. We've hardly been able to crowbar Mark away from this since it arrived, but now you too can have the chance to succeed where he failed, and get past the spinny silver ball things *(Hey, I got past them! – Mark)*. In this version (a small section of one of the full game's six huge levels), you're generously supplied with a tasty selection of power-ups right from the off, but even this heavily-armed you'll find seeing off the game's numerous and varied enemy attacks a tricky task (luckily though, for once you don't lose your power-ups when you die). Control is by the usual up-down-left-right-blast method, with the space bar selecting the currently highlighted power-up (from the selection along the bottom of the screen which advances by one every time you collect a power-up token from a destroyed alien baddie). Listen out too for the speech samples telling you what weapons are currently available to you. Frankly that's pretty much all you need to know for now – kill everything that moves, listen out for the handy hints in the speech, don't crash into aliens or scenery, and just generally have yourself a serious zaperama. The complete version of *Project X* should be out by the time you read this. Look to your laurels, *R-Type II*, *Project X* is coming... ●

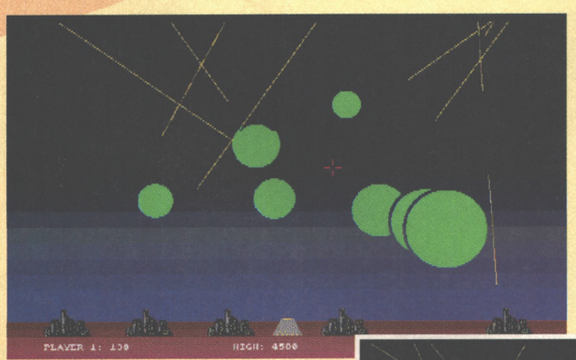


Gorgeous graphics, finely-tuned blasting action and some of the most spectacular power-ups around – it's *Project X*.

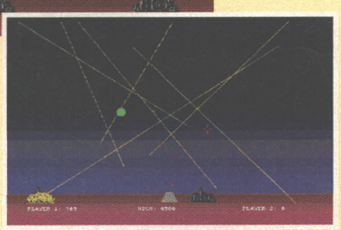
CONTROLS



MISSILE COMMAND



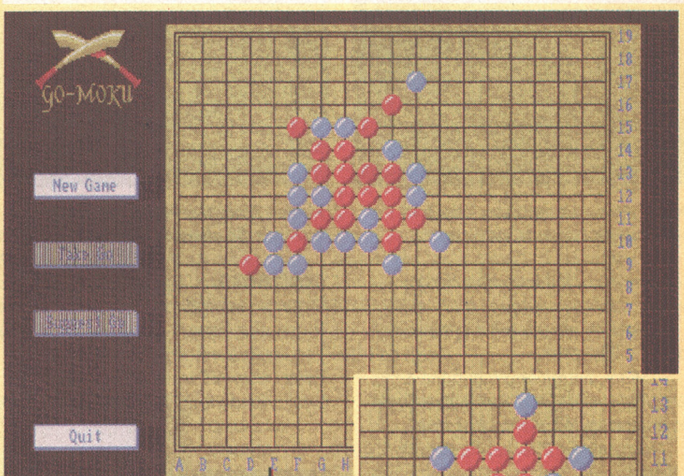
An awesome piece of arcade history – reproduced wonderfully in this smart PD version. Save those cities!



This month in Creaky Old Coin-Op Corner we're looking at *Missile Command*. An epic of Cold War fearmongering, the Atari arcade game put you in control of three missile defence stations attempting to intercept waves of ICBMs in a heavy WW3 scenario.

This conversion simplifies things a bit by only giving you one station to look after, but since you have to protect six cities from nuclear destruction with it, things still aren't too easy. Aim with the mouse, fire your missiles (you have a limited stock, so be careful) with the left button, and watch out for the smart missiles (little dots) which can detect defensive explosions and avoid them – the nasty little beggers. For more info, check out the doc file on the disk. ●

GO-MOKU



Five-in-a-row on a Go board? Well, you can't accuse PD of not being eclectic. Top brain-straining for all the family.

This month in Token Intelligent Game Corner, say hello to *Go-Moku*. Although it's played on a Go board (check out the review of Oxford Softworks' groovy *Go* game in this issue) it's not actually Go, being instead a simple one-player-against-the-computer five-in-a-row effort, the object of which is to, er, get five of your stones in a row while simultaneously preventing the computer from doing the same. That's all there is to it, really, but the doc file and in-game instructions will point you in the direction of the game's other little extra features. It's a tough one to beat, but it can be done – good luck! ●

Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus

"THE EARTH OPENED. ONE BY ONE THE MOST HIDEOUS MONSTERS OF GOTHIC HORROR CRAWLED THROUGH THE PORTAL. THE NIGHTMARE HAD BEGUN."

PRESENTING ELVIRA II: THE JAWS OF CERBERUS,™ A FANTASY QUEST OF EPIC PROPORTIONS.

AN EVIL FORCE HAS PENETRATED OUR UNIVERSE AND ABDUCTED ELVIRA HERSELF. YOUR TASK? FIND AND RESCUE ELVIRA INSIDE THREE CAVERNOUS MOVIE SETS—A GRAVEYARD, HAUNTED HOUSE AND CATACOMBS—THEN FIGHT A FINAL CATACLYSMIC BATTLE WITH A NETHERWORLD ENTITY OF AWESOME FURY. ♦ EXPLORE THREE HUGE AND HORRIFYING WORLDS WITH NEARLY 4000 LOCATIONS—FIVE TIMES LARGER THAN THE ORIGINAL ELVIRA ♦ OVER 120 HOURS OF SUSPENSE-INTENSE GAMEPLAY ♦ MORE THAN 700 DEADLY WEAPONS, SCROLLS AND OTHER TOOLS OF THE TRADE ♦ FULLY ANIMATED ENCOUNTERS WITH HUNDREDS OF FORMIDABLE NEW OPPONENTS ♦ NEW ON-SCREEN SPELL BOOK GENERATOR ♦ NEW ON-SCREEN HIT-POINT ALLOCATION SYSTEM ♦ NEW ON-SCREEN 360-DEGREE ENEMY DETECTOR & TRACKER ♦ THE VGA GRAPHICS? STUNNING. THE SOUNDTRACK? HAUNTING. AND 100% "POINT & CLICK" CONTROL MAKES IT SO EASY TO PLAY IT'S FRIGHTENING. THE BOTTOM LINE? ELVIRA II IS THE FANTASY BLOCKBUSTER OF THE YEAR. TO ORDER, VISIT YOUR FAVORITE RETAILER OR CALL (081) 877-0880.

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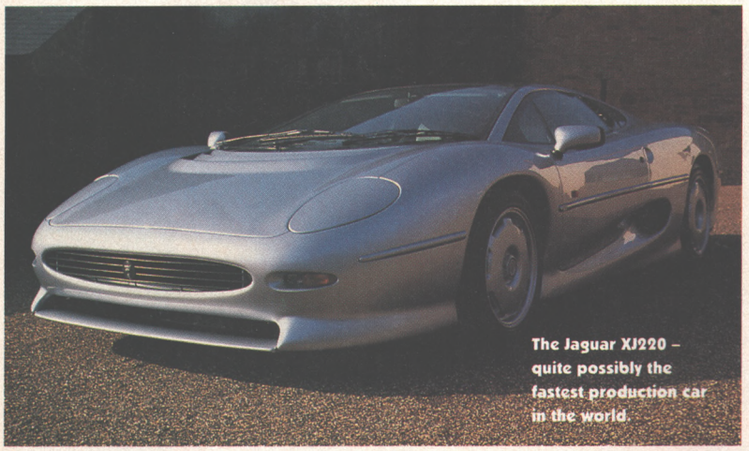
Actual game screens from IBM PC VGA version of the game. Elvira and Mistress of the Dark are the trademarks of Queen "B" Productions. The Jaws of Cerberus is a trademark of Accolade, Inc. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are properties of their respective owners. Elvira image © 1991 Queen "B" Productions. Game © 1991 Horror Soft Ltd. All other materials © 1991 Accolade, Inc. All rights reserved.

TRUE STORIES

CAT CHASER



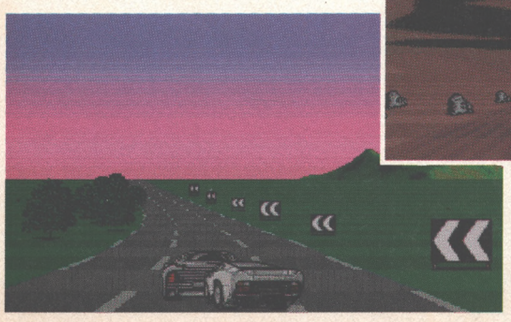
The Jaguar XJ220 – quite possibly the fastest production car in the world.

"There's no point in doing it if we can't be better than *Lotus 2*," say Core, "so rest assured, we're going to make sure that we are." Blimey, Gremlin must be enjoying this – everybody from System 3 to Ubi Soft seem to be taking pot-shots at *Lotus 2*'s next-to-undisputed driving game crown at the moment, but none of them seem to be quite hitting the jackpot. Latest to take a pop at the champion, though, is Core – who've rather developed into Gremlin's traditional nemesis over the years – and they've roped in their own super-fast British sports car to help them out.

Jaguar XJ220, as the new game is known, is modelled on Jaguar's super-expensive (£400,000 a throw!) limited edition supercar, so named because 220 mph is how fast they expect it to go! The game itself is viewed from a second person perspective (ie from behind the car), and takes the form of a series of races around a number of circuits, each one realistically mapped so that after a while you end up right back where you started. Things it has over *Lotus* include a variety of cars on the track (you find yourself racing against Porsche 959s, Ferrari F40s and so on, as well as other Jags), more roadside objects and (this is the biggie) claimed greater speed – what it doesn't have is the great variety of weather conditions that made *Lotus* so glorious.

But will it be better the better game? Goodness knows – we're sitting on the fence until we get a full review in a future issue. If you're interested, though, look out for it at the beginning of May, the price a very unsurprising £25.99.

● Stop Press: Jaguar fans who were expecting a Le Mans-style racing game instead of what you see here needn't be disappointed – MacIntosh Avery, top 3D programmer and the man behind *AH-73M Thunderhawk*, is working on just such a project, a Jaguar Le Mans Sports Car racing game in the style of MicroProse's *Formula One Grand Prix*. Look for it much, much later in the year.



Core are aiming to make their Jaguar game even faster than Gremlin's *Lotus Turbo Challenge 2* – the gloves are off!

BEST VALUE EVER!

If you're looking for a seriously groovy way to spend £30, we've got it right here. Ubi Soft have

just released the double pack of the year – Vivid Image's *First Samurai* and Sensible's *Mega lo Mania* together in the same pack for a bargain £29.99. Both games – 90 percenters or over in AMIGA POWER, and you know how tough we are – earned brilliant critical reactions and high initial sales, but had their undoubted long-term successes cut off in their prime by the collapse of publisher Mirrorsoft.

Now Ubi Soft has come to the rescue, the games are back on the streets, and – if you've got any sense at all – you'll snaffle up the double-pack right away.

NO SURPRISES HERE...

...but *Lotus Turbo Challenge 3* from Gremlin is indeed, as everyone must have been half-expecting, very much on the way. But just how are they going to top the multi-player and even-more-multiple weather antics of their last *Lotus Turbo Challenge* game? Stay tuned for more news on that next month...

PLAY THE NEW GAMES!

MEET THE PROGRAMMERS! AND MORE AT THE AMIGA POWER GAMES ARCADE JUST ONE OF THE GREAT FEATURES AT THIS YEAR'S

AMIGA SHOPPER SHOW

The time: Friday 15-Tuesday 17th May
The place: Wembley Exhibition Centre
The event: The first ever Amiga Shopper Show

Yes, such was the success of Amiga Format's World Of Commodore Show that we're doing another one! The Amiga Shopper Show won't have quite the razzmatazz and glitz of World Of Commodore, but it *will* have hundreds of stands dedicated to bringing you the best bargains in both software and hardware around. If you're thinking of buying a new Amiga, or some peripherals, or just a whole bunch of games, this is the place to be.

But that's not all! Right in the middle of the show you'll find the AMIGA POWER Games Arcade – a big section, packed with Amigas running the latest games, where we'll be running competions, gameplaying challenges (take on Stuart Campbell!), meet-the-programmer sessions and providing all sorts of giveaways. Ocean, US Gold, Psygnosis, Electronic Arts, Virgin and MicroProse are sponsoring it, so you know it should be good!

The Amiga Shopper Show is open from 10.00-6.00 each day (4.00 on the Sunday) and costs £6.00 to enter (£4.00 for the under-14s), but you (yes, you!) can get in cheaper by advanced booking. Ring 051 356 5085 for £1.05 off each ticket – it's that simple!

AND SPEAKING OF AMIGA SHOPPER...

...the magazine itself might be of interest to you next month. It features the first ever piece of Amiga hardware given away on a magazine cover, to wit, a Tracey, which is a tracing tool that attaches to your mouse and helps you, well, trace around photos or whathaveyou. This would normally cost you £7.95, so getting it free on the front of a £1.25 issue of Amiga Shopper (the May one, in the shops on April 2nd) has to be seen as a bit of a barg. (Okay, okay, so it's not much to do with games, perhaps, but we just thought you might like to know...)

BLOWING OUR OWN TRUMPET SPECIAL

We've been going for a year now – it's our birthday, doncha know? – so forgive us one story's worth of indulgence as we clear up a couple of points. Those who have no interest in magazine sales figures and all that cobblers are excused, of course, and can skip off over there to read about MicroProse games (or something)...

ABCs AND ALL THAT JAZZ

You may or may not know (or, indeed, care) about magazine sales figures, but we do (it's our business, after all) so we're going to tell you about them anyway. First off, ABC stands for Audit Bureau Of Circulations – an organisation which produces the only generally accepted figures on how well individual magazines are selling, usually on a six monthly cycle. The period July-December 1991 is the first one AMIGA POWER has been around long enough to qualify for, and the figures for all the relevant games mags have just been announced. Here they are...

AMIGA POWER	55, 172 per month
Amiga Action	58, 404
Zero	52, 580
The One For Amiga Games	48, 407
ACE	40, 772*

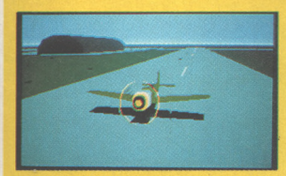
* But see the news story on page 13

Some sizeable drops for Zero, The One and ACE, then, and very well done to Amiga Action who've posted their highest ABC figure ever – and by quite a way. The AMIGA POWER performance is interesting, though. It's not only the highest first ABC ever seen in this market, but a closer analysis of the figures as they compare to those of near rival Amiga Action show that POWER actually sold more in the UK than Action did – the high Amiga Action figure relies quite heavily on a large number of copies shipped overseas. That's why the front of the magazine still claims to be the biggest seller in the UK – it's true, quite simply – and why the *next* ABC period for both magazines is going to be very interesting indeed. Ladies and gentlemen, place your bets...

AMIGA POWER – sex on paper, or what?

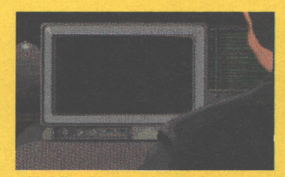
THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE AIR GAMES

There probably isn't a software house around that can boast quite the solid record of top-notch products MicroProse can, which makes any new game by them something to look forward to. Here, then, are three to save up for – they've been mentioned in these pages previously, but we've never had the full words'n'pics before...



B-17 FLYING FORTRESS
Fans of the film Memphis Bell or Lucasfilm's game *Their Finest Hour* will be itching to see *B-17*, a World War II flight sim simulating American bomber missions over occupied Europe. During each mission you get to fly in formation with other planes, play the role of any crew member at any time, and even select your choice of nose artwork! Put together by Vektor Grafix, the team behind *The Killing Cloud*, *Shuttle* et al, the Amiga version should be due later (perhaps much later) this year.

ATAC
Alright, alright, so the screen shots aren't all that spectacular, but this anti-drug baron flight-sim-cum-strategy game isn't due for at least another six months, so anything could change in the meantime. (Having said that though, it's being put together by Argonaut Software, the team who spent four years over *Birds Of Prey*, so we may never see the blooming thing at all!) Like *Birds*, this too features multiple planes – you get to control up to four at once, juggling between them as you undertake a serikes of near-future missions. Available in September, with luck, at £34.99.



DARKLANDS
It's not all flight sims though – MicroProse make their first entry into the currently-bursting-at-the-seams fantasy role playing market with *Darklands*, but it's one with a difference. Yes, the game is actually meant to be a realistic portrayal of life in 15th century Germany – at least to some extent, since dragons crop up on occassion! – and takes a much more text-based form than most recent FRPs. Look for it towards the end of the year (if it makes it onto the Amiga at all, which isn't 100 percent clear...)

WIN FIVE PAIRS OF TICKETS TO BOSCOMBE DOWN AIR SHOW WITH MICROPROSE'S B-17!

COMPETITION

To celebrate MicroProse's new *B-17 Flying Fortress* flight sim, we've got tickets to give away to one of the summer's big air shows, Boscombe Down, where you'll be able to see a Fortress for real! The show, which is held at Boscombe Down aerodrome near Salisbury, Wilts, is on 14-15 June (call 0891 122997 for more details). Five lucky winners will get a couple of tickets each if they can tell us:

How many people did it take to crew a fully operational B-17 bomber?

Send your entries in to Bandits at four o'clock! Compo, AMIGA POWER, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

CRIB SHEETS

This month we turn our attention away from the big, long-established software houses, and instead focus on a development house-cum-affilate label, namely...

VIVID IMAGE

Contact: Vivid Image, 9, Churchill Court, 58, Station Road, North Harrow Middlesex HA2 7FA
History: Formed as a development house in September 1988 by Mev Dinc, John Twiddy and (since departed) Hugh Riley, who got together while the trio were working on *Last Ninja 2* for System 3. Produced two games for Activision (RIP), one game for Mirrorsoft (RIP) and are now looking for a new publisher brave enough to take them on...
People: Vivid Image is just a small set-up, currently consisting of Mev'n'John plus a handful of developers employed more or less full time on a freelance basis, chief amongst these being ex-Spectrum star Raffaele Cecco (programmer on *First Samurai*) and Teoman Irmak, the graphic artist.
Greatest Success: Mev says: "*First Samurai* has to be the biggie. As a game it was not only large, but consisted of various different styles of gameplay too – I think people realise how ambitious it was, and that's paid off in terms of excellent press coverage and three nominations for the forthcoming ECTS awards. One thing we're particularly pleased about is how we overcame the slow disk access on the Amiga, making the loading process almost transparent."
Greatest Failure: *Hammerfist* and *Time Machine* were distributed by Activision and, and despite receiving a lot of good press, didn't actually do very well at all. Mev again: "While we were finishing the *Time Machine* project there were rumours that Activision were going under, which caused problems with marketing and distribution, and subsequently turned out to be true! That's when we signed with Mirrorsoft and look what happened to them! To cap it all, we were also involved with the doomed Commodore 64 GS console, AND never got paid. We're the kiss of death, ha ha!"
Typical Vivid Image game: "We believe in good quality original products which push the hardware to its limit. Well, that's what we like to think, anyway."
How do other people see them: "Hopefully we're seen as a group of people with certain standards who won't compromise on quality."
Product Development: "We don't like restricting ourselves with a fixed game design. To begin with we have an overall idea or objective, but as we go along we add or change things. We always take into consideration outside opinions, especially magazines."
Final Word: "We believe in giving value for money, taking into account that software is still expensive. I hope that when games players see our games on the shelves they don't doubt their quality and originality."

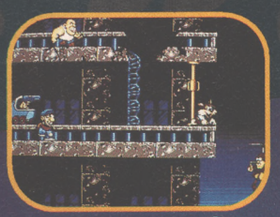
Vivid Image's Mev Dinc in full-on raging samurai mode – complete with hairy chest.

TITUS the FOX

To Marrakech and back

Join Titus the Fox in his hilarious adventure "To Marrakech and Back". On foot, riding a skateboard or flying your magic carpet, you set off across the Sahara to free your kidnapped love - Foxy! You encounter many enemies such as Babyboon, the kid with the deadly bottle, and Toyo the spectacled snake.

This mega-game has already been hailed by the critics as the reference for Jump'n'Runs in the computer-games world.



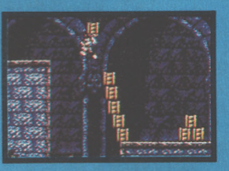
PLATFORM GAME OF EXCEPTIONAL SIZE:
MORE THAN 900 SCREENS ON 16 LEVELS WITH 54 EXTRAORDINARY ENEMIES. SECRET ROOMS, HIDDEN BONUSES AND DEADLY TRAPS.

EXPLOITS FULL CAPACITY OF EACH MACHINE:
AMIGA (50 HZ, MORE THAN 60 COLOURS ON SCREEN, HARDWARE SPRITES). PC (ADLIB CARD).

UNIQUE SYSTEM OF INTERACTION:
PLAYER - ENEMIES - OBJECTS - BACKGROUNDS.

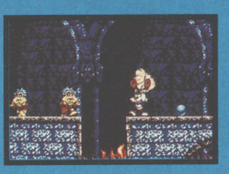
OPTIONS:
LEVEL CODES, CONTINUE,
AJUSTABLE MULTI-DIRECTIONAL SCROLLING.

AMIGA
ATARI ST, PC,
COMMODORE 64,
AMSTRAD CPC



Demonstrate your agility in overcoming obstacles.

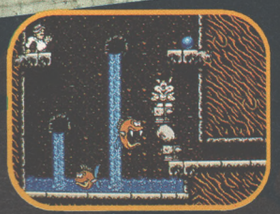
Eliminate your enemies in cold blood....or by surprise.



Pick up "Great Oaf" from behind and paste him to the walls.

The bowling in this game is great, particularily when your enemies are the pins.

Can your find your way to the hidden rooms full of bonuses, additional energy and extra lives.



TITUS

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TEL.: (071) 278 0751

ANOTHER CALAMITOUS ENDING

If you ever used to pick up the odd copy of ACE to kill time while you waited for the next AMIGA POWER, you're going to have to get into a new habit – ACE closed at the beginning of March (the April issue is the last you'll see), due to declining sales, falling ad revenue, the fluctuating exchange rate between the pound and the Deutschmark, and 'musical differences' for all we know.

For us here at AMIGA POWER, mixed feelings were the order of the day – while we didn't much care for the sneaky little jibes ACE had taken to aiming at AP in recent months, it has to be said that it was still one of the few computer mags to offer a modicum of intelligence and wit in its editorial content. At the end of the day the UK games magazine market will be poorer for the loss of ACE, and those of us who don't thrive on toilet humour for sub-educated 10 year-olds will mourn its passing. Bye bye, ACE.

EGGSELLENT!

CodeMasters fans will be pleased to hear that *Bubble Dizzy* (see the Codies feature in AP9) *won't* be a stand alone game at all – at least, not yet – but will appear on a five-game Codies compilation, *Dizzy's Excellent Adventures*, instead. It sees Dizzy – Britain's most popular computer game character! – in a madcap ride up from the bottom of the sea on a series of fast-popping bubbles, while assorted 'fishy foes' get in the way!

Groovy underwater action with a fantastic skankin' soundtrack.

Even more exciting for real Dizzy fans, though, is the long-awaited arrival of the first *Dizzy* game – the only one in the series never before seen on the Amiga – on yet another five game pack. This one, called the *Cartoon Collection*, also features *Seymour Goes To Hollywood* (another game featured in that classic Codies feature) and costs £24.99 (as does *Excellent Adventures*, in fact). Erm, hurrah?

HERO QUEST TWIN PACK

Fans of the *Hero Quest* board game who've yet to pick up Gremlin's rather good computerised version, but would like to, should keep their eyes peeled for the *Hero Quest* double pack. This features the original game and the add-on data disk *Return Of The Witchlord* in the same pack, and is on sale now for a 'bargain' £29.99. Erm, that's it...

RUGBY SPECIAL

To celebrate the forthcoming Rugby Five Nations Championship, Audiogenic are releasing a special version of their *World Class Rugby, World Class Rugby – The Five Nations* (would you believe?), featuring not only a modified scenario, but also the ability to load and view replays, better intelligence and simpler controls. Have fun, rugger fans...

MAN EATEN ALIVE BY HIS OWN INTESTINES! (WITH PICTURES)

Yes, it's true, Elvis flew the Loch Ness Monster to Pluto in a World War 1 biplane, killed 436 hitchhikers including Adolf Hitler and Marilyn Monroe (who was actually a multi-tentacled alien from Venus), then met a woman with 86" breasts, who he persuaded to play strip poker with him. No surprises there then. No, the really shocking thing is that this whole sorry tale (well, the strip poker bit, anyway) *isn't* documented in the latest piece of grubby sleaze from 'top' pornographer David Sullivan, but instead in a new game from Storm, once-top-but-now-increasingly-desperate software publishers of this parish!

For those who are interested, *Daily Sport Covergirl Poker* features the well-documented talents of Maria Whittaker and former Miss Denmark Trine Somethingorother, amongst others, and will probably be out (along with a number of other things) by the time you read this. Truly sad cases can feel free to fork out £26 for a fuzzy digitised version of something you could get 50 times better for a tenth of the price from the top shelf of any newsagents, but here at AMIGA POWER we say 'spend the money on a big bunch of flowers and send them to a real girl – you'll get a much bigger thrill that way'. Thank you.

DELIVERANCE DELIVERS

Deliverance, eh? So where's Burt Reynolds then? And what about that blonde bloke, you know, Jon Voight? Where's he at, eh? *(Right, that's it. You're definitely fired – Ed).*

21st Century, whose *Pinball Dreams* was the surprise smash hit in this office over the past weeks, still has its long-awaited *Deliverance* scheduled for release right about now. This, based on an old Hewson 8-bit hit by Vivid Image person Raf Cecco, believe it or not, features a very different looking viking character (the original was a sort of gnome) in a platform hack-'em-up scenario. Look for a full review soon, but in the meantime, feast your eyes on the rather scrummy picture above...

Oh dear...

We like to play Amiga games / with lots of fun and frolics,
But now and then there's one like this / a total load of *(Snip! -Ed)*

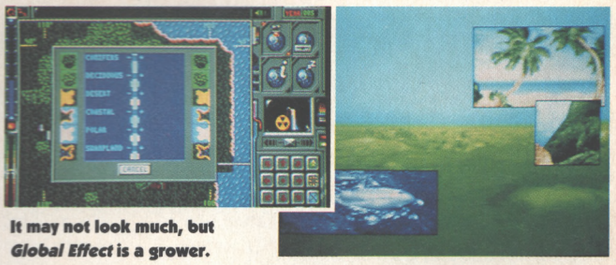
NOTHING AT ALL

We've had a change of heart, bile fans. Oh Dear is going to be no more. Under unbearable pressure from the software industry, we've decided that it's just not fair to keep viciously putting the boot into really crap games. Even the worst film tie-in, the lamest cartoon licence or the most pitiful platformer represents six months of some poor programmer's life, and it's not really big, hard, clever or constructive of us to rip it apart in the name of amusement for you, the voyeuristic readers.

Yes, we've realised the damage we're doing to all those lovely software publishers who do their very best to bring you, the public, top-quality entertainment at the lowest price possible, and hence will devote this space from now on to a new column entitled 'Hurrah!', in which we will glowingly reappraise some great games of yesteryear which unfairly failed to get the wonderful reviews they undeniably deserved at the time of their initial release. We're sure you'll agree, such an approach will be altogether more rewarding and mutually heartwarming one, and a much truer reflection on the industry as it currently stands. Thank you.

Next month in 'Hurrah!': DYNASTY WARS...

GLOBAL EFFECT



It may not look much, but *Global Effect* is a grower.

Stunning may not be the first word that springs to mind looking at the screenshots, and yet that's exactly how the people at Millennium and new marketing company Electronic Arts are describing *Global Effect*, a 'world strategy simulation' as far removed from the likes of *Robocod* as a very far removed thing. It's a strategy game, in case you were wondering, one which simulates 'the interaction of economical, industrial, environmental and military factors in managing the world balance.' As a world leader you can try to tackle environmental issues or, alternatively, set out to selfishly rule the world by economic or military means. In other words, it's far too complicated to explain in any great detail here, but that doesn't mean it won't be great fun – it's intended to be much more accessible, and much more of a game, than the long delayed *Sim Earth*. Review next issue.

IF ONLY HE COULD REPRODUCE HIS LIVERPOOL FORM...

Krisalis have announced that their long-awaited John Barnes game will now be released to tie-in with the European Football Championship to be held in Sweden – as part of a double-whammy in fact, as their new Graham Taylor Management game will be put out at the same time too.

Greatly improved game logic and a new graphic engine means that *John Barnes Of England*, the game's new name, will run 35 percent faster than the current generally-accepted-top-footie-game *Manchester United Europe*. The fact that there are both black and white players in the game gives the game a bit more authenticity too. (And why hasn't anyone thought of doing this before?)

***John Barnes* – delivering more kicks than *Man Utd Europe*.**

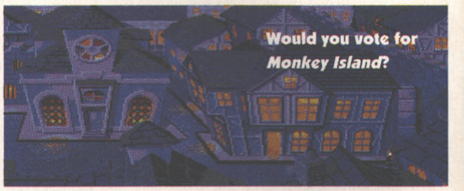
Other improvements? Well, the game logic is said to be much better than that in *Manchester United Europe* – a lot of time has been spent trying to make the computer player resemble a skilful human opponent much more closely, for instance, making winning against the machine a much trickier proposition. Viewpoint is unusual too – it sticks with the standard side-on, as-viewed-from-the-stands perspective for the bulk of the game, switching to an overhead view for penalties, free kicks and so on. Structure of the game is based around the games played between the last eight national sides in the European Championship, and the release is closely tied in too – it'll be 'on the streets', as they say, mid-summer.

PUTTING YOUR EGGS IN LOTS OF DIFFERENT BASKETS DEPT

Commodore, who are, of course, one of Europe's bigger sellers of PCs as well as manufacturer of the Amiga, are just about to release their first ever PC games package. Price was of course the main consideration here, and they've put together the best combination they could for a target £699 price point – for that you get a 286 PC with a VGA graphics board, a monitor, a couple of whizzy speakers and a selection of games. It's basically everything you'll need to play some pretty damn good PC games, and, as such, could prove to be the strongest opposition the Amiga's faced in the serious gameplaying market yet. Talk about hedging your bets, eh?

WHO WOULD YOU VOTE FOR?

Along with the European Computer Trade Show held in April (a trade only event, so don't bother trying to go along) comes the ECTS Awards, perhaps the nearest thing to computer game Oscars that there is. Every year they're voted for by (amongst others) journalists from over 50 magazines across Europe, including the AMIGA POWER team. Nominations – there are about 20 different categories, would you believe? – have been announced, and here's the final list for the biggie, Game Of The Year. Which would you go for?



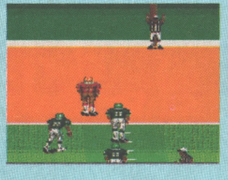
Populous II
Lemmings
The Secret Of Monkey Island II
Wing Commander II (PC only)
Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
Mega lo Mania

We'll bring you the name of the lucky winner – plus those from the other important categories – in the June issue.

● Stop Press: ELSPA, the European Leisure Software Publishers Association, has named Monday 13th April, the middle day of the European Computer Trade Show (ECTS) where the above awards will be presented, as 'National Play A Game Day', in honour of, erm, we're not quite sure really. Expect lots of people to be playing games on the 13th (or something)...

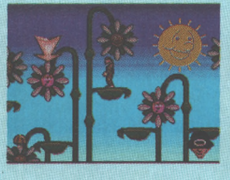
AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

We've racked our brains to bring you our favourite games of the past month...



JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL (Electronic Arts)

83! 25! 96! Hut! Hut! Hut! Snap that offensive pitch to the deep zone! Switch play to quarterback rush followed by half back screen passing play! 44! 51! √-72/π! Help! (Does anyone know what we're talking about? Maybe Neil West, who called this 'the most complete Amiga game you'll ever play' does? "Yes, you're talking complete rubbish.") Oh.



HARLEQUIN (Gremlin)

***Harlequin* represents the peak of the platform game. Veering wildly from cutesy cartoon caverns to eerie and sinister overground levels, *Harlequin* takes you on a wild ride through a dreamworld which just happens to contain the grooviest arcade adventure puzzle blastathon this side of *First Samurai*. If you only buy one game this year, this is the one to get.**

SHADOWLANDS (Domark)

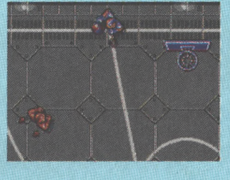
The first of a trio of games for people who like to exercise their brains more than their trigger fingers. This one keeps the statistical faffing around down to a minimum, and in the process makes this imaginative RPG more accessible than almost anything in the genre to date. And you'll be seriously impressed by the light-and-darkness effects, too.

BLACK CRYPT (Electronic Arts)

This title will probably live forever as The Game That Made An Accountant Out Of Gary Penn. Our erstwhile Consultant Editor isn't known for his tolerance of anything RPG, but he really enjoyed himself playing this *Dungeon Master*-alike orc-slasher last month. The sad man. Still, if it can do that to our Gaz, think how much all you RPG fans out there will love it...

STORM MASTER (Silmarils)

Moving away from RPG for a moment into the realms of kingdom-style economic management games, this slick French effort takes an ancient theme and brings it bang up to date with gorgeous presentation and action sequences to give you a break from number-juggling. The novel move-through-time difficulty-changing option is a neat touch too.



FUTURE BASKETBALL (Hi Tec)

***Future Basketball* simulates – yes! – basketball in the future, which basically means basketball with loads of violence and explosions. Sounds great already, doesn't it? And it is. Okay, it's a bit of a poor man's *Speedball 2*, but hey – there's a recession on, doncha know? If you're poor and you like *Speedball 2*, don't miss this.**

I LIKE DRIVING IN MY CAR

***Race Drivin'* – kind of like *Hard Drivin'*, but racier (and quite a bit better actually).**

Hurtling into the office and screeching to a halt in a cloud of acrid smoke on the Ed's desk just too late for inclusion in this issue was Domark's moderately long-awaited coin-op conversion of *Race Drivin'*, Atari's sequel to the hugely popular *Hard Drivin'*. While the Amiga version of the original game suffered badly from a lack of speed and some seriously awkward control, this effort looks a good deal more together. The speed has been significantly improved, and all the features and track layouts (you get four courses to race on this time, the original two plus 'Super Stunt' and 'Auto Cross' tracks) of the arcade game seem to have survived the translation intact. We're saying no more at the moment for fear of spoiling the review next month, but it seems a pretty safe bet that there's an altogether more favourable write-up coming Domark's way this time around.

MARIO ESCAPES FROM NINTENDO! (OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT ANYWAY)

Recognise this chap? It's Nintendo's Mario, of course, and – like Sega's Sonic – he's unlikely to ever appear on the Amiga (or any other home computer for that matter), such is Nintendo's protectionist attitude to its assets, of which the little Italian plumber is perhaps the biggest one. Or so we thought. It now turns out that Software Toolworks, a Mindscape affiliate, are to bring Mario educational games to the PC – under the watchful eye of the big N, of course. Could these come to the Amiga? And, more importantly, is this the thin end of the wedge as far as Mario licensing is concerned? We can only wait and see...

The Addams Family

ocean®

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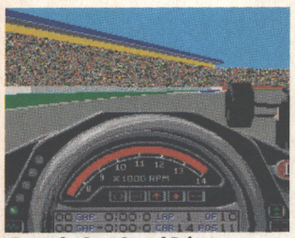
MICROPROSE GET THE FORMULA RIGHT

Formula One Grand Prix (New entry, Number 1)
There'll be dancing in the streets of Gloucestershire tonight. MicroProse – and, in particular, the Tetbury-based British arm of the American simulation specialists – are very happy with the success of *Formula One Grand Prix*, and who can blame them?

Scott Johnson of their Quality Assurance Dept is certainly a happy man, saying: "We're very proud of the product. It was good fun to work on the game and it's actually one of the few we're still playing regularly throughout the company. We



***Formula One Grand Prix* – unsurpassed racing thrills'n'spills.**

thought that there was a decent-sized hole in the market for a good racing simulation with 3D graphics, and we weren't wrong. There were plenty of arcade driving games, but no up-to-date sim – *Indy 500* used to be the best racing game on the market, but that's quite old now, and *Formula One Grand Prix* beats it in every significant area.

So why has it taken so long for the game to come onto the market?

"Basically we spent a couple of months tidying up a few bugs we found after the game had been reviewed and was meant to hit the shops. We wanted to produce a good game with a long shelf life, which meant it was more important to get everything completely right than to hit the deadline we'd set ourselves."

FOOTBALL MANAGER MANAGES SECOND PLACE FOR CODIES

First Division Manager (Number 2)
Code Master's Richard Eddy's a happy man.

"Wow! number two, eh? We're very pleased," he enthused on hearing the news. "The football management genre is hugely popular but far too often exploited for a quick buck, so it's quite rare to get a management game that's quite as good as this one. we set ourselves the target of getting good graphics, good sound and

AMIGA POWER GALLUP CHARTS
AMIGA TOP 100

····· Exceptional ····· Nearly there ···· Very good ··· Has its moments ·· Flawed · Dire

1 (NE) FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX MicroProse £34.99 *****
2 (9) FIRST DIVISION MANAGER Code Masters £7.99 **
3 (10) JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER Virgin £29.99 *****
4 (8) SCOOBY DOO AND SCRAPPY DOO Hi-Tec £7.99 *****
5 (1) WWF WRESTLEMANIA Ocean £25.99 **
6 (NE) JAMES POND GBH £7.99 ****
7 (NE) OPERATION THUNDERBOLT Hit Squad £7.99 ****
8 (2) BIRDS OF PREY Electronic Arts £34.99 ****
9 (NE) F-16 COMBAT PILOT Action 16 £9.99 ***
10 (6) POPULOUS 2 Electronic Arts £29.99 *****

11 (58) GHOULS AND GHOSTS Kixx £7.99 ***
12 (3) ROBOCOP 3 Ocean £25.99 ****
13 (4) JAMES POND 2 – ROBOCOD Millennium £25.99 ****
14 (19) WACKY RACES Hi-Tec Software £7.99 **
15 (18) INTERNATIONAL NINJA RABBITS Micro Value £7.99 ***
16 (5) THE NEW ZEALAND STORY Hit Squad £7.99 *****
17 (RE) ROBOCOP Hit Squad £7.99 ****
18 (NE) PAPERBOY Encore £7.99 **
19 (7) LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE Gremlin Graphics £25.99 *****
20 (25) FANTASY WORLD DIZZY Code Masters £6.99 ****
21 (NE) UNTOUCHABLES Hit Squad £7.99 ****
22 (20) WORLD CRICKET Zeppelin £7.99***
23 (63) ULTIMATE GOLF GBH Gold £9.99 **
24 (RE) RICK DANGEROUS Kixx £7.99 **
25 (16) HEIMDALL Core Design £34.99 ****
26 (NE) ABANDONED PLACES Electronic Zoo £29.99 ****
27 (50) POPULOUS Star Performers £10.99 ****
28 (NE) FOOTBALL CRAZY CHALLENGE Anco £25.99 **
29 (12) LOMBARD RAC RALLY Hit Squad £7.99 ***
30 (35) ALTERED BEAST Hit Squad £7.99 **
31 (38) SHADOW OF THE BEAST Sizzlers £7.99 **
32 (21) BATMAN – THE MOVIE Hit Squad £7.99 ***
33 (NE) PGA TOUR + Electronic Arts £29.99 ***
34 (26) DIZZY COLLECTION Code Masters £24.99 ****
35 (80) WOLFCHILD Core Design £25.99 ***
36 (13) LEANDER Psygnosis £25.99 ****
37 (NE) GIANTS OF EUROPE Anco £7.99 **
38 (NE) TOYOTA CELICA RALLY GBH £7.99 ***
39 (15) ANOTHER WORLD Delphine/US Gold £25.99 *****
40 (27) DOUBLE DRAGON 2 Tronix £9.99 ***
41 (49) OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS Psygnosis £19.99 ***
42 (NE) LITTLE PUFF Code Masters £6.99 **
43 (NE) PGA COURSES Electronic Arts £14.99 **
44 (43) PRO BOXING Code Masters £7.99 *
45 (11) BUBBLE BOBBLE Hit Squad £7.99 ****
46 (NE) EDD THE DUCK Zeppelin £7.99 *
47 (29) CHASE HQ Hit Squad £7.99 *
48 (31) ALIEN BREED Team 17 £24.99***
49 (NE) ITALIA '90 Tronix £9.99 **
50 (NE) INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY Zeppelin £7.99 *
51 (NE) A320 AIRBUS Thalion £35.99**
52 (23) RETURN TO EUROPE Anco £7.99 **
53 (NE) THE JETSONS Hi-Tec Software £12.99 *
54 (42) DRAGON NINJA Hit Squad £7.99 *
55 (41) KNIGHTMARE Mindscape £30.99 ***
56 (60) CRUISE FOR A CORPSE US Gold/Delphine £27.99 ****
57 (47) BOARD GENIUS Beau Jolly £29.99 ****
58 (40) SOCCER STARS COMPILATION Empire £25.99 ***
59 (RE) MONKEY ISLAND US Gold £25.99 *****
60 (14) MICROPROSE GOLF MicroProse £34.99 ****
61 (75) KNIGHTS OF THE SKY MicroProse £34.99 *****
62 (36) HEAD OVER HEELS Hit Squad £7.99 *****
63 (57) STUNT CAR RACER Kixx £7.99 ****
64 (51) FUNSCHOOL 4 (7-11) Europress Software £24.99 ***
65 (76) F-15 STRIKE EAGLE 2 MicroProse £29.99 ****
66 (33) NINJA COLLECTION Ocean £19.99 *
67 (28) TERMINATOR 2 Ocean £25.99 ***
68 (NE) VIDEOKID Gremlin Graphics £25.99 ***
69 (53) RENEGADE Hit Squad £7.99 ***
70 (64) MOONSTONE Mindscape £30.99 ***
71 (55) THE SIMPSONS Ocean £25.99 ***
72 (30) FIRST SAMURAI Mirrorsoft £30.99 *****
73 (22) MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE Krisalis £25.99 *****
74 (39) BATTLE ISLE Ubi Soft £30.99 ****
75 (52) NINJA RABBITS Micro Value £6.99 **
76 (34) PGA TOUR GOLF Electronic Arts £25.99 *****
77 (62) ICE HOCKEY Pocket Power £2.99 **
78 (67) FULL CONTACT Team 17 £9.99 ***
79 (NE) R-TYPE Hit Squad £7.99 ***
80 (NE) 2 HOT 2 HANDLE Ocean £29.99 **
81 (98) NORTH AND SOUTH Digital Integration £7.99 ***
82 (44) X-OUT Kixx £7.99 *
83 (32) THE GODFATHER US Gold £30.99 **
84 (NE) COMBO RACER GBH £7.99 **
85 (RE) RUGBY THE WORLD CUP Domark £25.99 **
86 (RE) RAILROAD TYCOON Micro Prose £34.99 ***
87 (NE) HOME ALONE Accolade £24.99 *
88 (79) HIGHWAY PATROL Pocket Power £2.99 *
89 (NE) CHICAGO '90 Pocket Power £2.99 *
90 (NE) SECONDS OUT Pocket Power £2.99 **
91 (61) MEGA LO MANIA Mirrorsoft £30.99 *****
92 (81) LEMMINGS Psygnosis £25.55 ****
93 (72) NINJA WARIORS Tronix £9.99 ***
94 (65) POWERMONGER Electronic Arts £14.99 ***
95 (69) TURRICAN Kixx £7.99 **
96 (NE) IVANHOE Hit Squad £7.99 ***
97 (70) CALIFORNIA GAMES Kixx £7.99 **
98 (NE) CRICKET SIMULATOR Soundware International £24.99 **
99 (84) EYE OF THE BEHOLDER US Gold £30.99 *****
100 (89) RAINBOW COLLECTION Ocean £19.99*****

We figure you must have some idea how the charts work by now, so briefly: they're put together by Gallup, they mix budgies and full pricers together, games are rated in stars, and they're © ELSPA.

every thing else that normally goes towards making a good game into our one – all too often these things are missed out of management games."

US Gold, Domark, Thalamus and Krisalis all have full-price management games coming out soon. Do you think you'll do another one?

"We may – if we can find a product which will improve upon this one, then there's always the possibility of a *First Division Manager 2*. We've no immediate plans though."

THE NAME'S POND – JAMES POND!

James Pond (New entry, No 6)
The reaction from Gremlin's budget team is "brill, brill, brill!" Erm, great. Anything else?

"Well," says Gremlin's Ian Richardson, "we knew that it would do well because of

***James Pond* – riding high on the coat-tails of *Robocod*.**

***Robocod* – the success of that will rub off onto *James Pond*. We knew that it was a good title when we licensed it for budget and compilation release from Millennium – until *Robocod* came out *James Pond* was the best title Millennium had – but we didn't know just how well the timing would work out. Our re-release of *Pond* while *Robocod* is still high in the charts has obviously helped a great deal. What's more, I guarantee we'll be at the top of the charts again next month when *Manchester United* and *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge* come out on budget too."**

OCEAN EXPECT A RARE SUCCESS

Operation Thunderbolt (New entry, number7)
Ocean's back in the top ten with this re-release of a game that did so well for them as a full price. It was seemingly no surprise to the ever-confident Jo Cooke:

"It did very well for us as a full price game, so it's only to be expected that it would do well as a budget too. As a sequel to *Operation Wolf* it did amazingly well, actually – it went to number one, which hardly ever happens with a sequel."

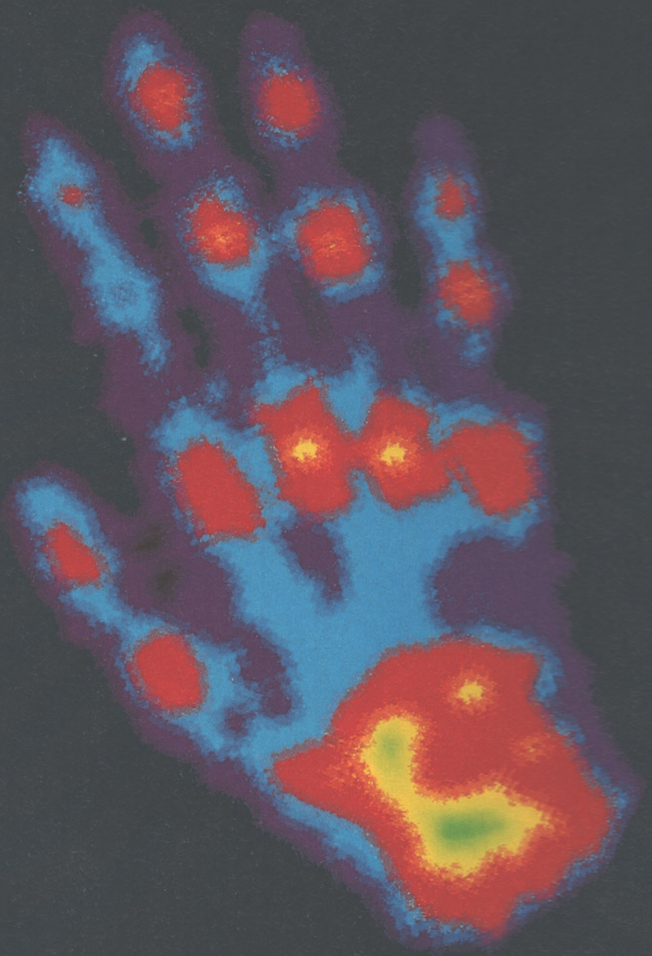
the bitmap brothers

★

xenon

cadaver

speedball 2



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Renegade

BITMAP BROTHERS

...RESCUE THE HOSTAGES... RESCUE THE HOSTAGES... RESCUE THE HOSTAGES...

When Operation Thunderbolt confronts a deadly alien force there is only one way to survive... check out SPACE GUN. Rescue the crew of an Earth-bound cargo ship hijacked by an unknown life form. Annihilate those hideous creatures throughout all levels of your space craft using the high powered weaponry. You have a stunning arsenal of 'specials' such as the FREEZE and the BLADE plus many more. From first person perpective you confront an interminable onslaught... it is the survival of the fighters.

SPACE GUN

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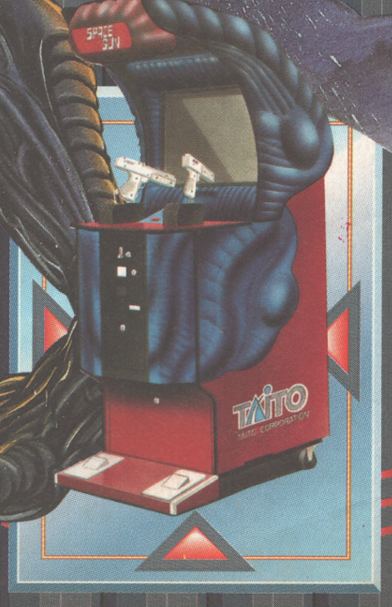

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JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?

MATT BIELBY

We decided to treat the Ed to a night out this month (don't ask us why). Strange then, that as soon as we tried to order a round of drinks down our local the group of us were forcibly ejected from the premises. Seems like you just can't take the old guy anywhere these days....
Matt's been reading: Car And Driver, Elmore Leonard and The Complete Judge Dredd

SALLY MEDDINGS

So it's goodbye to Lisa and warm welcome for new girl Sally Meddings. She'll be doing the art thing along with Amanda – and having worked with our Ed in Your Sinclair days, she knows what she's letting herself in for. And she still took the job! What a hero! (What a masochist!)
Sally's been reading: Ten Beads High, Weaning Your Baby and The Camomile Lawn

MARK RAMSHAW

Between bouts of flu, Mark's been fighting with his brother (just for a change) and mourning the end of his two favourite TV programmes – Dream On and Spender. The poor chap is now a pale shadow of his former self.
Mark's been reading: The Tau Of Pooh, Fear And Loathing in Las Vegas and letters addressed to a 'Mr A Powers'(!)

NEIL WEST

Neil's been wined and dined by Virgin this month, but has still found time to write his own paperback (given away with the next issue of Sega Power) as well as follow in the Ed's footsteps (hoofsteps?) by taking up horseriding. "I haven't fallen off yet", boasts the bow-legged one.
Neil's been reading: Martin Amis' Money, Staring At The Sun, Road Rash (by Neil West!)

STUART CAMPBELL

Stuart's been on yet another holiday to his homeland (that makes two weeks in as many years!) this month. Racing back in time to review *Parasol Stars*, 'Britain's most popular game reviewer' was thoughtful enough to bring Highland Toffee chews for the lot of us. Hurrah!
Stuart's been reading: The last issue of Ace (sniff), American Psycho and train timetables

JONATHAN DAVIES

Jonathan has proved so popular with his hints and tips that that he's now all but confined to a life of problem solving and cheat finding. Still, it makes a change from all those strange wargames we keep sending him. Sorry Jonathan, we love ya really.
Jonathan's been reading: War And Peace, your letters, several meaty manuals

GARY PENN

Gary doing heavy research for his new book this month. It's all about... but no, this a family publication, so we'd better stop right here. He also found time to visit Amsterdam – a romantic valentine surprise for his sweetheart, would you believe?
Gary's been reading: Catcher In The Rye, Decline And Fall, The Fortean Times

MATTHEW SQUIRES

Matthew's been buying some vintage tackle this month – settle down, girls, it's in anticipation of a salmon-fishing holiday – and has started going to lots of indie gigs. Would you believe, he's now a confirmed fan of groups like Lush and Spitfire? Guess you're only young once.
Matthew's been reading: Fly Fishing by J R Hartley, J G Ballard's Crash

AMANDA COOK

Amanda's been ten pin bowling this month, where she skilfully managed to come... last! Dear oh dear, it seems that unless it's available on a Game Gear cartridge our Art Ed just can't seem to get a high score. (Still, she wields the crayons like nobody's business...)
Amanda's been reading: Clockwork Orange and her Donald Duck Game Gear instructions

KARL FOSTER

Karl's being trying to keep his bank manager sweet (without too much success), while at the same time getting well into the Industrial scene (that's a type of music, apparently). He highly recommends Skinny Puppy to all you more daring pop pickers.
Karl's been reading: Samuel R Delaney's The Fall Of The Towers and Cosmopolitan

LISA NICHOLS

As we pointed out last month, some people are never happy. First it's her flat, now it's her job. Yep, silly old itchy feet has jumped ship to go and work on another Future mag, so it's a tearful farewell from the AP team. (Now where did we stash that celebratory bubbly?)
Lisa's been reading: Tales From The City (all eight or so volumes), Escape From Colditz

DAVE GOLDER

Dave's been partying down Canterbury way, patching up other peoples' relationships as he went. He also stood religiously outside Neil Tennant's house for several hours (don't ask us why) but the reluctant Pet Shop Boy failed to make an appearance. Boo.
Dave's been reading: Psychotic Reactions and Carburettor Dung ("It's very pretentious")

GAMES

Parasol Stars – **the new Amiga No1?**

At last! There's a bit more colour and noise with this month's releases – a nice change after all the role-playing games we've had to cope with recently. This month sees us get to grips with *Parasol Stars* (finally!), Stuart and Mark arguing over Roger Rabbit's new adventure *Hare Raising Havoc*, MicroProse's *Special Forces* get some rigorous treatment, the ever-lovable *Titus The Fox* (as featured on this month's cover disk) reviewed in a rather novel way, and more! More! (More!) From the outstanding *Vroom* through the outlandish *Dynablaster* to the out-of-its-league *Red Baron*, it's a month with a game for every taste. (But if you want to do yourself a real favour, check out 21st Century's utterly wonderful *Pinball Dreams*, possibly the most loaded game in the AMIGA POWER offices this month. It's simple, but it's great.) But enough – on with the reviews...

Pinball Dreams – **metal balls a go-go.**

THE AMIGA POWER SCORING SYSTEM (AND HOW IT WORKS): AN EASY-TO-USE BEGINNERS GUIDE

The AMIGA POWER reviewing philosophy is an absolute doddle to understand. No, really, it's simple. But hey, some of you are reading this bit, so you must be at least a *mite* confused. Here, then, is a brief run-down on the ins and outs of it all, layman style.

1) We're all aware of how much software costs, which is why we believe a game has to be *really* good to be worth buying – *or* worth giving a good mark. Happily, there's more than enough top-notch stuff around if you only look – we mark as hard as we do to prevent you from wasting time (or money!) on the bad ones. You'll thank us for it in the end...

2) We believe rating systems should be simple and easy to understand. That's why we just give one mark out of 100, a few summing up sentences, and that's it. What more is there?

3) What, a third point? You know we don't believe in them!

PARASO

Well, it's here, but what everyone wants to know is, "Is it better than *Rainbow Islands*?"

Game: Parasol Stars
Publisher: Ocean
Authors: Mick West (coding), Don Mc Dermott (graphics), Matthew Cannon (music)
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

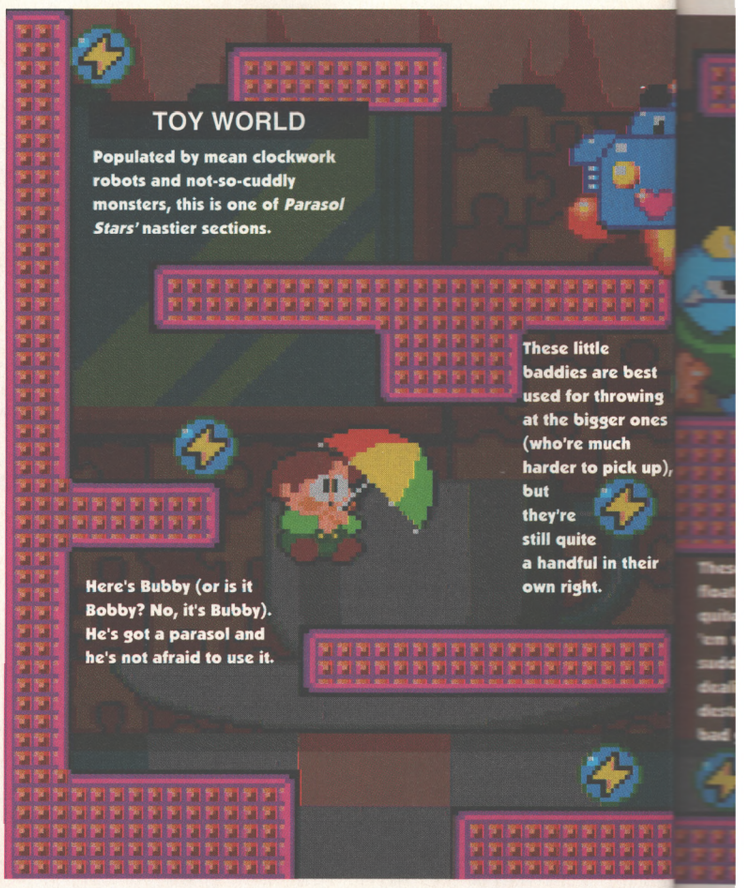
It's here at last! Man the barricades, batten down the hatches, splice the mainbrace, no-one here gets out alive! Time for some {serious} reviewing...

Parasol Stars is the third game in the *Bubble Bobble* series, having been preceded by *Bubble Bobble* (obviously) and *Rainbow Islands*, the current AMIGA POWER choice as Best Amiga Game Of All Time. And that's all the background you're getting, 'cos quite frankly all three games have such silly, dodgily-translated Japanese storylines it'd be a total waste of space to go into them here. Instead, let's get right down to the nitty-gritty – is this game better than *Rainbow Islands* or what?

No. There you go, pretty revolutionary concept, huh? Now some of you may be thinking 'He's thrown away his best card dangerously early in the review there Brian, this is a review of 1200 words and it's going to need 110 percent effort if he's going to keep the crowd interested to the end', but the point to note here is that, despite what everyone in the world (including us) might have said, it doesn't really matter two hoots how this compares to *Rainbow Islands*.

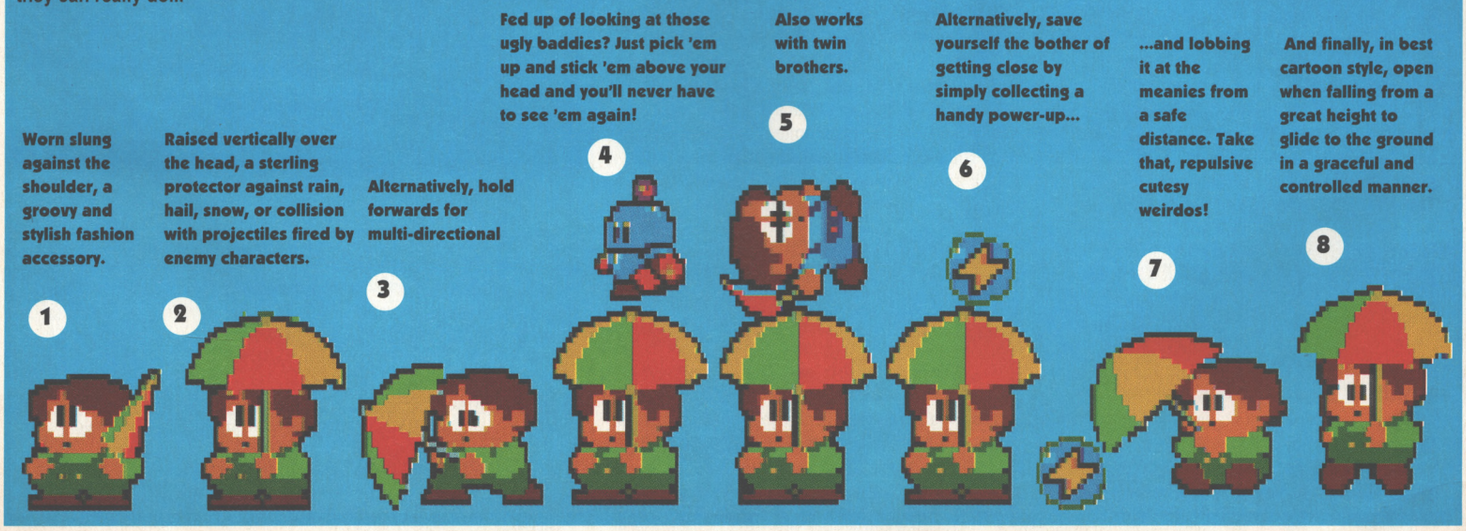
Well, it does a bit, if only for the sake of argument (so check out the STARS IN THEIR EYES box), but the most important thing by far is – and forgive me if I'm stating the obvious here – how good a game it is in its own right. The best pedigree in the world means nothing if it's just used to sell a mediocre cash-in (ref *Gauntlet 3*), just like the worst background imaginable can still produce an all-time classic (ref *The Blues Brothers*). So forget about the history. Forget about *Rainbow Islands*. Forget about *Bubble Bobble*. Forget the hype. Forget your own name if you like, but let's take a cold, hard look at *Parasol Stars* – the game. →

"The two-player game is one of the best I've ever seen"

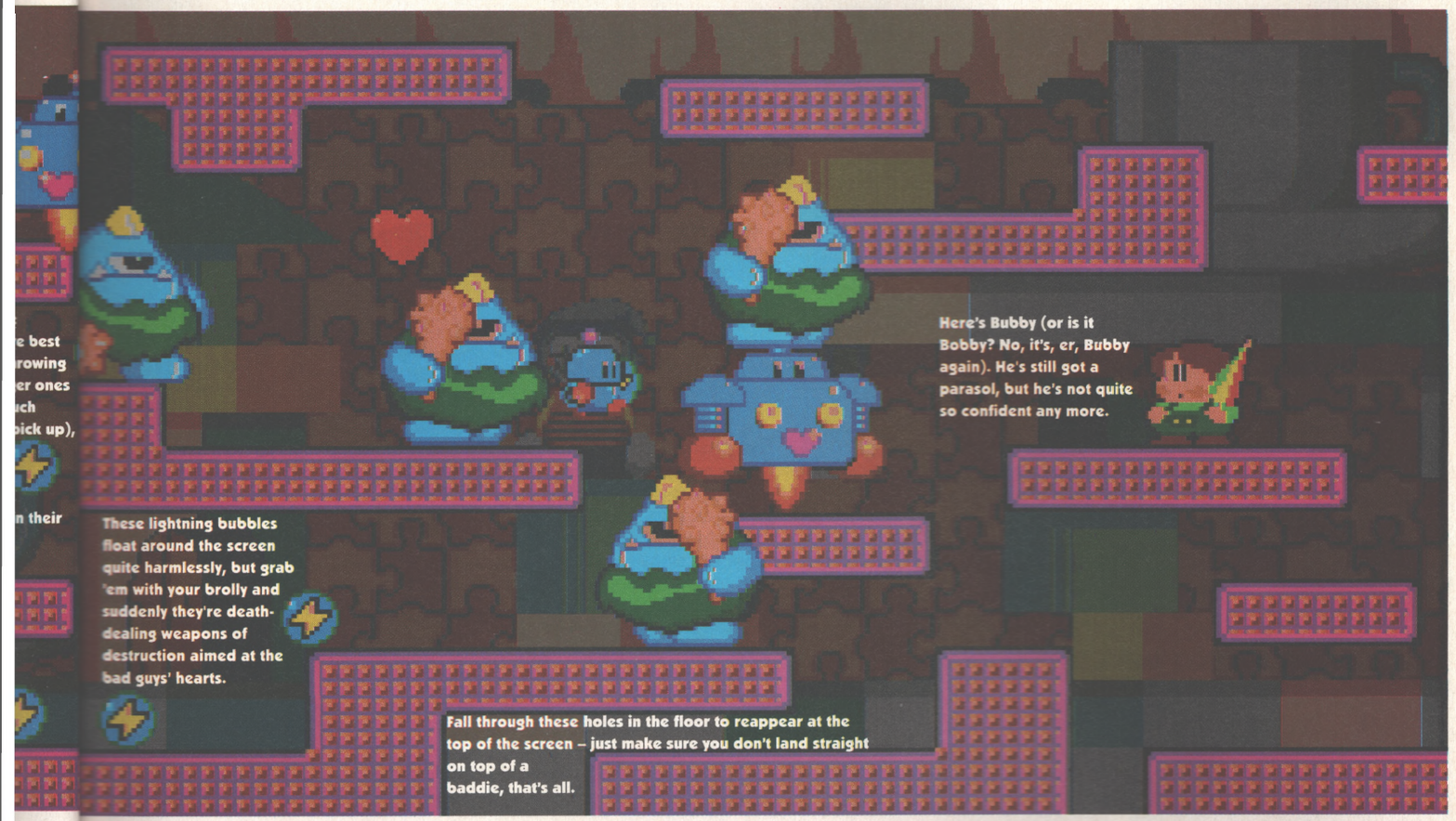


A BOY AND HIS BROLLY – EIGHT WAYS TO WEATHER THE STORM

In common with our heroes' previous armaments, the parasols of *Parasol Stars* are versatile and powerful weapons – these aren't your everyday umbrellas, oh no. Bubby's and Bobby's multi-coloured weather shields have 101 uses (well, at least eight anyway). Let's take a quick look and see just what they can really do...



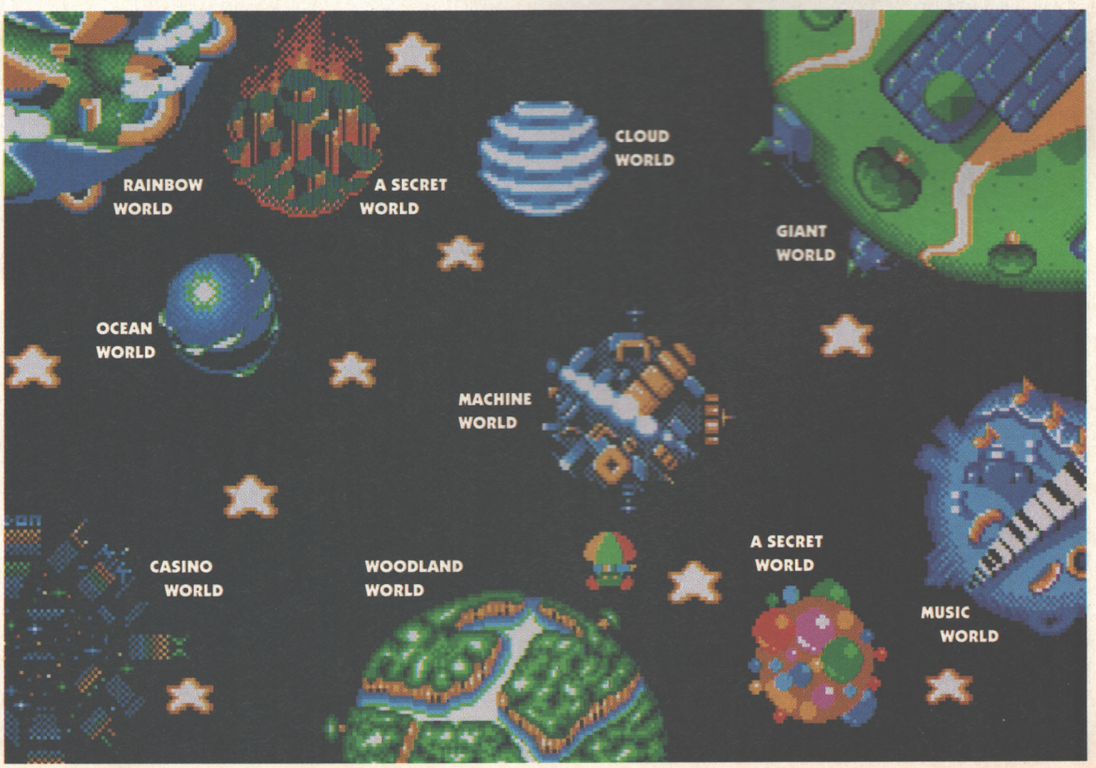
L STARS



SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

This map screen which appears between worlds shows you the state of Bubby and Bobby's universe as the game proceeds. Initially all the worlds except Rainbow World (top left, and the starting point of Bubby and Bobby's adventure) are filled with dull greys but as the boys complete each stage, the worlds are returned to their natural colours.

There are seven worlds to start off with, but successful completion of secret tasks reveals another two (the colourful knobbly one near the bottom right and the spooky-looking one near the top left on the map) which can be tackled after the last normal world in order to see the 'proper' end sequence. This is the same as the original PC Engine version of the game, but Ocean's programmers have also created another brand-new, exclusive world which can be accessed purely for kicks and bonus points. It's not actually shown on this map, and we're not going to blow the surprise by telling you how to get to it just yet, but it is in there. Stand by, then, for Music World, Woodland World, Machine World, Casino World and a few more besides.



TROUBLE WITH BUBBLES

That's trouble for the baddies, of course.

Scattered through the various screens of *Parasol Stars* you'll find little bubbles with one of four icons inside. All of them can be grabbed with your parasol and fired at the baddies to identical effect, but collect enough of them and they form one giant bubble, each kind of which behaves in a different way.

WATER
Form a giant water bubble and release it and it acts like the water flow in *Bubble Bobble*, sending a stream cascading to the bottom of the screen by the quickest possible route, carrying any baddies (or Bubby or Bobby) who get in the way along with it, or inflicting serious damage on any nasty big enough not to get swept away.

FIRE
A released fire bubble also imitates a *Bubble Bobble* feature, the napalm droplet. It causes a sheet of flame to spread over the floor for about four times Bubby or Bobby's width, which is deadly to any baddie that touches it (except end-of level bosses, who suffer severe damage). Bubby and Bobby must take care not to step in the flames themselves, though, or they'll be frozen (if that's the right word) to the spot for several seconds.

LIGHTNING
Yet another refugee from *Bubble Bobble*, the giant lightning bubble actually behaves like an overgrown version of the little lightning bubbles Let loose a big one and it shoots across the screen, obliterating everything in its path and going through walls like they weren't there. (But again, you'll need to hit an end-of-level boss several times even with these.)

STARS
The only weapon which doesn't have an ancestor in *Bubble Bobble*. Fire up a giant star bubble and the five little ones making it up will separate again, form a circle and spin off in a massive spiral pattern, inflicting the appropriate havoc on anything they touch. As you don't have to line yourself up with an enemy to use this weapon and it covers more or less the entire screen, this is the most powerful power-up you'll get.

You thought you'd slaughtered them all years ago, but we've flown these baddies all the way from *Rainbow Islands* to be here tonight.

OH NO! IT'S HYPOCRISY ALERT!

Okay, so I know I just said 'forget about *Bubble Bobble*', but the unavoidable first thing that strikes you when you start to play *Parasol Stars* is just how like its illustrious parent it is. Single screens (for the most part, a few levels scroll horizontally a little bit), masses of baddies in set formations, and often loads of bubbles floating around containing weapons lifted directly from the original game (see TROUBLE WITH BUBBLES). The nasties' movements are noticeably similar too, floaty, bouncy, jumpy kinds of stuff, and they even share the same property of getting 'angry' if you half-kill them and then allow them to recover before you finish the job off.

Gameplay-wise you've got the same objective, just kill everything on each level and move onto the next one, making judicious use of the *Bubble Bobble*-type power-ups and bonuses which appear seemingly (but almost certainly not, as any *Rainbow Islands* devotee will tell you) at random around the screen. Perhaps a good comparison to make at this point would be with *Switchblade* and *Switchblade II* – in that case too, a simple arcade game was followed by a sequel which upped the style quotient by several hundred percent and refined the design almost to perfection without really changing it a significant amount. (And, the original *Switchblade* was over-rated too, but let's not get into that...)

STEP BACK IN TIME, DR WELLS

In many ways, then, *Parasol Stars* is a step backwards (at least in design terms). But then, as we were discussing earlier, so what? It is still, it can't be denied, an excellent game. I personally didn't care for *Bubble Bobble* as a one-player game at all, but this is immensely playable in solo mode, with the same ease and instinctiveness of control that was one of *Rainbow Islands*' strongest points. Not that the two-player version isn't great, though – in fact, it's one of the best

Continuing the deja vu, let's take a trip down Memory Lane to *Bubble Bobble*...

Above: Yeuch!
Right: Aah, isn't she sweet? Well, no. This evil princess and Her Little Pony hurls tear-stained tissues around, so use your brolly.

Woodland World. Just check out those authentic woodland minibuses...

I've ever seen. The interaction between the characters is inspired, and adds a whole new dimension to the game,whether the two players are battling it out (stealing bonuses, hitting each other with weapons or even picking each other up and using the other character as ammunition to throw at the baddies) or co-operating to even the odds by sharing power-ups, saving your brother from baddies or even using your parasol as a platform to give the other player a boost to an otherwise-unreachable bonus or area of screen. The critical difference between this and *Bubble Bobble*, though, is that you don't feel as if you're missing out on half the fun if you're playing *Parasol Stars* by yourself.

So after that neat ideological backflip, what are we left with? A great game?

"Is it as good as Rainbow Islands? No"

Certainly. A worthy sequel? Undoubtedly. An earth-moving, life-altering, boundary-shattering, transcendental game experience? Afraid not. *Parasol Stars* is a fab little arcade game, and that's as far as it goes. You might argue that that's all you could ever expect it to be, and maybe you'd be right, but in the last year I've played a lot of games that have moved me more than this one, and perhaps I've given the real reason away by calling it 'little'. Of all the things I'd have expected from *Parasol Stars*, a feeling of 'bigness' was probably the most important one, and it doesn't really have it.

Please don't get me wrong, I like this game a hell of a lot, but at the end of the day it has to go down as just the slightest of disappointments.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

ON THE OTHER HAND... I guess this isn't exactly an On The Other Hand, but I'm desperate to get my name somewhere in this review, so here goes. Contrary to popular belief, not everyone thinks that *Rainbow Islands* is the best Amiga game ever (I'd choose *Mega lo Mania* or *Monkey Island*), but it *was* the best platformer around. I say *was*, because for my money this is at least a ninety percenter. And it IS better than *Rainbow Islands* – I found the free-form style of that game just a little too loose. *Parasol Star*s on the other hand (ahem) uses a more confined and controlled playfield, has a groovy two-player mode. The tighter gameplay make this the new state-of-the-art for Amiga platform games. Get a paper round. Wash cars. Become a chiropodist. Even become a journalist. (Hey – it could be worse, you know?) At all costs buy this game.

- Mark Ramshaw

UPPERS Arcade playability, but with some real depth to it if you look hard enough. Instant appeal but a lasting challenge. Technically and aesthetically almost impossible to fault, and the two-player mode is truly inspirational.

DOWNERS Doesn't have anything like the same addictive hook as *Rainbow Islands* – it's beautiful to play but you won't have much of a problem tearing yourself away from it.

THE BOTTOM LINE

That it perhaps doesn't entirely live up to our expectations is our own fault rather than Ocean's or the programmers', but don't get the wrong idea – this is a gorgeous arcade game, right up at the top of the league alongside *Rodland* and all the rest, but it's just not quite the universe-beater you we were hoping for. You'd be a fool not to buy it, though.

88 PERCENT

STARS IN THEIR EYES

No game is an island, as they say (or something), which means you've got to compare them to one or other, sooner or later. Which is just what we're going to do here...

More than anything else, *Parasol Stars* is going to have to stand comparison with three other games – the two previous *Bubble Bobble* titles (*Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands*) and the current holder of the 'best single-screen platform baddie-basher' award, *Rodland*. Oh yes, and *SWIV*. Here then, in a handy series of cut-out-and-keep guides for future reference, is how it shapes up against the best of the immediate competition. You may agree, you may disagree (most of the office seems to), but read it anyway. You might learn something...

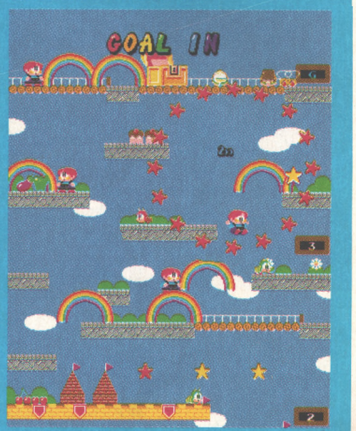
WHY ISN'T IT REALLY ANY BETTER THAN RODLAND?

The most obvious 'modern' comparison for *Parasol Stars* is Storm's *Rodland* (86 percent in issue six). The single-screen (more or less) style, the close-range beat-'em-up action and the basic arcade gameplay of the two titles is sometimes strikingly similar (witness, for example, the way you can use some enemies to clobber others in both games). To be honest there's very little to choose between the pair, but my personal vote goes (just) to *Rodland* for that game's tighter, more focussed action – occasionally *Parasol Stars* is just so chaotic you can get killed without seeing what hit you, which I'm not all that keen on. (Having said that, everyone else in the office prefers *Parasol Stars*).

WHY IS IT BETTER THAN BUBBLE BOBBLE?

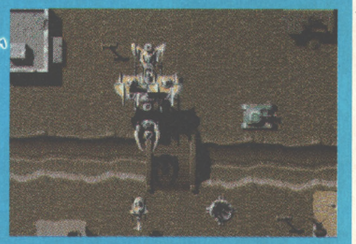
Pretty easy, this one. *Bubble Bobble* came out three years ago, and it shows. *Parasol Stars* is bigger, prettier, faster, slicker, more varied and more involved, and it's loads of fun in one-player mode as well as with two, something you can't say about the older game. While *PS* is very obviously descended from *BB*, it's miles beyond it in every department.

WHY ISN'T IT BETTER THAN RAINBOW ISLANDS?



Here's the question everyone at AMIGA POWER wants to know the answer to, but in actual fact the answer's a simple one. What it all boils down to is the basic gameplay concept. While *Rainbow Islands* was centred totally around trying to get to the top of each platform structure, a naturally compulsive goal (getting somewhere and then being knocked back down – whether physically at a specific point or in a general 'game over' sense – is a sure-fire way of making sure you want to try it all over again), *Parasol* Stars gives you the much simpler objective of beating up a screen of baddies in order to get to another screen of baddies. And that's all. While the changing scenery and new enemies do add an addictive pull rooted in curiosity, it just isn't anything like as strong as *Rainbow*'s play on basic human nature.

AND HOW DOES IT COMPARE TO SWIV?



(That's enough corpse-kicking – Ed).

WILLY BEAMISH

Sierra go back to school for their latest hard drive-based graphic extravaganza.

Game: The Adventures Of Willy Beamish
Publisher: Sierra
Price: £34.99
Authors: Dynamix
Release: Out now

Lawks-a-lawdy, it's another American brat. 'No, keep calm', I thought. 'Don't let your pathological hate of Macaulay Culkin and his kind prejudice you against *Willy Beamish*.' Actually Master Beamish isn't *that* dislikeable, even if he does own a pet frog called Horny.

But enough of my personal psychotic tendencies, and on with Sierra's latest stab at a hard-drive based interactive adventure (well, would you want to play from 12 floppies?). Broken down into the simplest possible terms, *Willy Beamish* comes across like the child of an unholy marriage between *Hearts Of China* and *Leisure Suit Larry 5*. And, as such, it has many of the same strengths and weaknesses as those games (obviously most of the weaknesses can be traced to the *Larry* side of the parentage).

"A nice try, but the result is far too limited"

The game begins with Willy's frog causing a bit of commotion in school assembly – the last of the school year. From here we see Willy daydreaming about playing in the 'Nintari' Games Championship (Nintari = Nintendo mixed with Atari – clever, eh? Well, maybe not). His fantasy soon dissolves in a puff of smoke, though, and the realisation hits that he's actually sitting in the class, with the witch-like teacher staring down at him. Teacher explains that this is the last lesson of the school year, and that the report cards have been posted to all the kids' parents – it's at this point that you can be forgiven for complaining, quite loudly, that, hey, we're five minutes into gametime, and we haven't actually been given the chance to *do* anything yet! Thankfully this intro of David Lean proportions can be skipped, but...

Into the game, and the structure is similar(ish) to *Hearts Of China*, which means that the bits of 'action' are divided by little bits where the player gets to select a possible action or choose an answer to a question. Movement is achieved by moving the cursor around – if it transforms into an arrow, then Willy can move in that direction. If not, it's tough. The conversation bits are pretty rudimentary, usually no more than three possible answers are available. More often than not selecting the inappropriate answer will result in Willy being sent of to Military

Checking out the inventory of Master Beamish. (Why has he got a wig in there?)

version also available

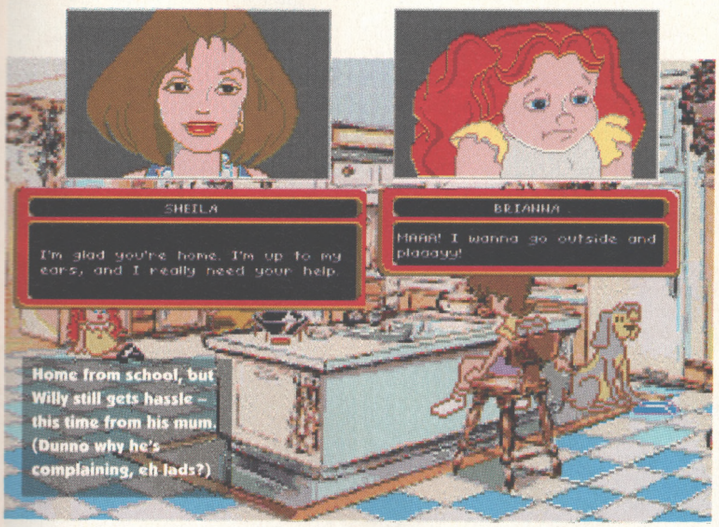
Academy (Bill & Ted, anyone?) ie Game Over. This limited form of control and interaction is frustrating to say the least. There's practically no freedom of movement (one of the most important ingredients to an adventure) and any deviation it *does* allow from the correct path to completion might be fun, but sure doesn't get you any further.

Willy Beamish does have good points, though. The graphics are pretty snazzy, with watercolour-style backgrounds – all unfinished lines and carefree dabs of colour. The sprites perhaps look a little too simple by contrast, but they move pretty well. And the cameo pics of the people actually do have quite a bit of character (much like the nurse's 'top heavy' uniform, which seems to have a life all of its own).

IT'S A MAN'S, MAN'S WORLD

Willy's mum is particularly well, um, realised. Call me a sexist (the girls in the office do anyway), but it's not hard to forget about the little brat, and concentrate much more on the irrestistibly cute parent. Hey, nice belly button! Willy's kid sister also proved kind of fun. Demanding to be pushed ever higher on the swing, it's hard not to succumb to her wishes. Hey, kid, you want to go really high? Hee, hee, hee. These little (ahem) 'high points' really show just what can be done with the scenario and game structure. It's just a pity that the plotting wasn't a little 'tighter', and more freedom made available at each stage.

"The conversation is pretty rudimentary"



Home from school, but Willy still gets hassle – this time from his mum. (Dunno why he's complaining, eh lads?)

I guess the best comparison is along the lines that if *Hearts Of China* is one of those posh Eagle picture stories, then *Willy Beamish* is a good old-fashioned cartoon strip – and as such could easily be the more successful of the two.

The story isn't bad, the characters are neat, and the cartoon graphics work well. It's just the one-dimensional nature of the gameplay which lets things down. I know it's supposed to be like playing a comic, but that doesn't mean that the plot has to be so linear. More 'pathways' would have bolstered the longevity tenfold.

THE COMIC DOESN'T STAND UP

As it stands it plays almost like a straight strip, with just the one plot. The result is that deviations from the pre-determined plot are so minor as to be unnoticeable, character interaction is similarly down to pre-programming, and once it's been seen once, there's no need to ever play it again. In this sense it's going to suffer comparisons with – of all things – *Space Ace 2*!

Parents just don't see the funny side of putting your little sis in hospital...

... and Willy doesn't see the funny side of getting sent to Military School!

To sum up then, it's a nice try, but the result is just far too limited. I hear that they're currently working on *Willy Beamish 2* – maybe that one will up the level of interactiveness a bit, because as it stands the game system used in *Willy Beamish* is just way too simple. Hrmph. I never liked kids anyway.

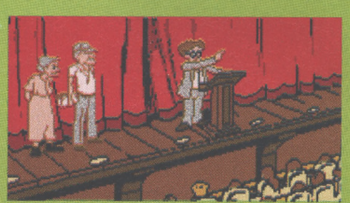
● *MARK RAMSHAW*

SCHOOL'S OUT FOR SUMMER...

The lengthy intro sequence depicts everyday life at your typical American school.

It may be the last day before the school holidays, but there's still plenty of time for our Willy to land himself in trouble. Even as early as morning assembly things aren't exactly going smoothly...

In morning assembly at Carbuncle High, Willy and his friends grab a nap...



Mr Frick drones on and on. The kids, as usual, pay no attention whatsoever.

Willy snores away, while something small and green rustles in his backpack.

Wake up Willy! Horny is about to cause havoc, and Mr Frick won't be pleased..!

Willy wakes up, but not in time to catch his pet frog. Now he's in trouble..!

Mr Frick becomes an unwitting frog-lover. This is *not* going to be a good day...

UPPERS The humour, graphics, plot and speed are a huge improvement on *Larry 5*. For adults, the chance to go back to childhood and misbehave is (not surprisingly) jolly good fun.

DOWNERS It's all so damned linear, and actually getting to do anything evil usually results in 'game over' (something that Sierra seem to resort to all too often). The interaction is rather limited too.

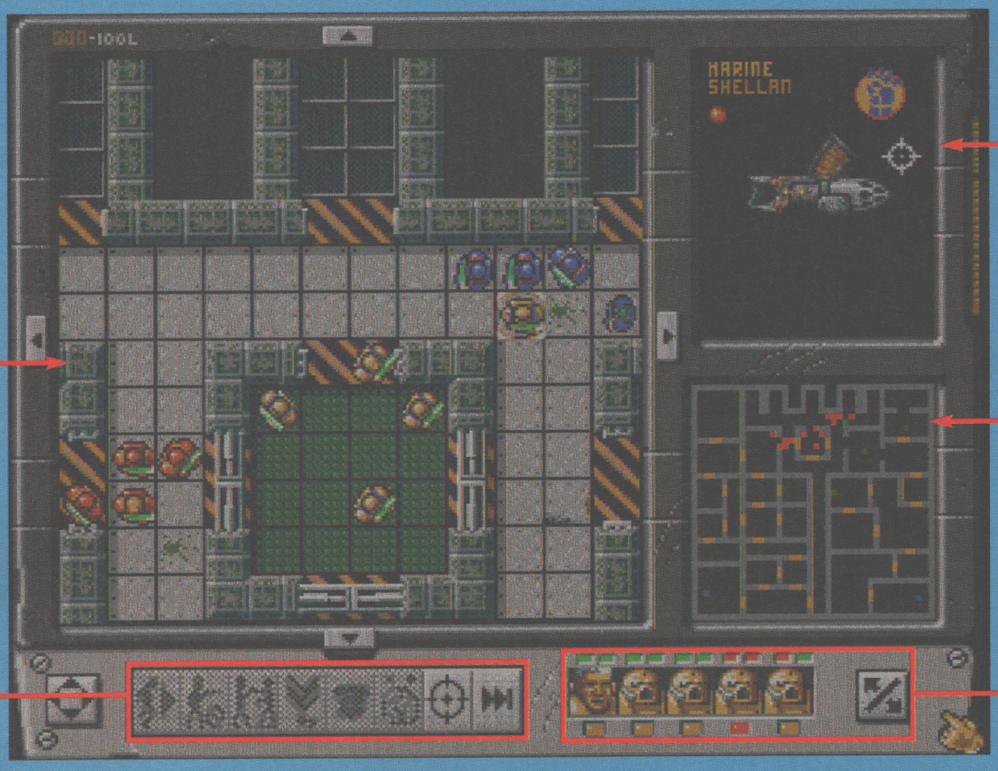
THE BOTTOM LINE

Not as engrossing or flexible as *Hearts Of China*. One for the younger player (but how many of them have access to one meg Amigas with hard drives?). Kind of fun, but at £35 quid a throw you really want a bit more. I guess it's just better suited to the PC really.

69 PERCENT

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

This screen is the core of the game. All orders are given from here, with the 3D mode being used to get a better view of the action.



This area displays the currently selected team member, his name, and his weapon.

The close-up, scrolling map of the battle arena. All movement and combat is initiated here. The arrows at the sides scroll the map around.

The long range scanner gives a full overview of the battlefield. Watch out for the green dots!

The troop control icons – those greyed out are currently unavailable.

To the left are the team status icons, while the button on the right toggles between 2D and 3D display.

Gremlin have a second bash at converting a Milton Bradley board game. But this *isn't* just *Hero Quest* in space.

Publisher: Gremlin
Price: £25.99
Authors: Mike Hart (code), Ade (graphics)
Release: Out now

The pre-game team selection screen. It's actually possible to select control of all three teams if you're feeling pretty confident.

Xenophobes of the world unite! We've a hot spot of off-world alien activity to counter, this time brought to us by Gremlin Graphics. *Space Crusade*, based on the popular Milton Bradley board game of the same name, offers humankind the challenge of blowing various shades out of those despicable, non-specific creatures we've never even met, but suspect are lurking somewhere out in the vacuum of space.

Given half the chance they'd be down here – taking our women, taking our jobs, running amok with reverse-phase Plasmoquod Gigablasters™ and generally acting like they do on telly. 'We come in peace'? Hah! Blow 'em to pieces on their home turf – that's your task here, as you control a marine chapter commander and his men, all armed to the teeth with some damn heavy-duty weaponry and intent on alien annihilation.

Based on similar lines to Gremlin's fantasy board-game conversion *Hero Quest*, the computerised *Space Crusade* sets itself quite a task in trying to improve on the thrills and strategic depth of its physical forebear. That game system's popularity stems from its dispensing with clutter – the sort found in the more anally-retentive role-playing games – to create a faster-paced adventure. But can the Amiga version match and improve on the Alien-esque suspense created so

SPACE C

Arming up with some extra equipment.

successfully by the board game?

Up to three players can take part, with the computer looking after the aliens, or you can control up to three chapters of marines by yourself. The missions, should you decide to accept them (a complete waste of £25.99 if you don't), are 12 in number and involve such tasks as wiping out every living creature in an alien craft, rescuing hostages and destroying thoroughly irresponsible devices created to tear apart the space-time continuum and bring chaos to the universe. (Whoever gave those tentacled alien toe-rags the technology to rip up space needs a severe talking to!)

The aim is to collect honour badges for successful missions and to trade the badges for increases in your commanders' ranks. And the higher a commander's rank, the more equipment can be carried and the more orders can be given during a mission. So, with all that in mind, let's be off to the barracks, find out what orders we can give and get our three, five-man chapters kitted out.

The arming procedure is fairly simple, if a little tedious, but bounces along to a rather neat, Jan Hammer-like soundtrack which gets those adrenalin glands dribbling as your salivary glands slaver over the weaponry on show. Each commander gets to choose from various close-combat devices and his charges have a choice of one item of such heavy-duty stuff as rocket launchers and plasma cannon – mean-looking bits of kit to match the 'Darth Vader on steroids'-style battle armour in which they're all togged up.

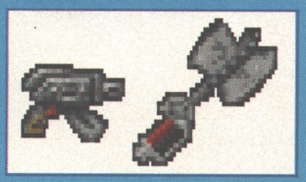
Sadly, there's nothing in the way of statistics to tell you just how efficacious each weapon is, so it's a case of trial, error and hoping you're not going into battle with the techno-warrior equivalent of a →

WEAPON SHOPPING, SPACE CRUSADE-STYLE

A vicious multitude of futuristic firepower is available at the arming stage, each with its own pros and cons. The plasma cannon, for instance, has a limited field of fire, but can blap through aliens with ease. In fact, the bolt carries right through a whole row of them give half a chance – great fun when they're all standing in a line just gagging for it, though make sure none of your own men are standing immediately behind the target alien when you fire!

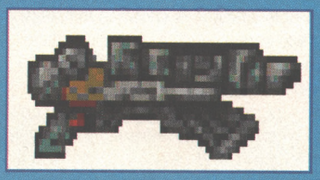
On trhe other hand, the assault cannon and bolter can be pointed at specific targets, though the former is much more powerful. The missile launcher has a wide field of fire and can shoot over the heads of your own men. Plonk a rocket amid a close gaggle of aliens and see 'em smoke as one. The drawback with this piece of kit is its weight – the chap toting it lumbers around with half the movement range of a bolter-carrying marine.

The commanders are limited to choosing a power glove and sword; a power axe and hand bolter; or a heavy bolter. The first two options come into their own during hand-to-hand combat. And no, you can't throw them.



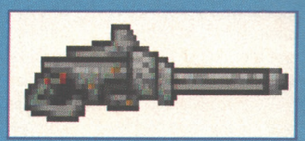
The power axe and bolter – a neat little combination.

Another deadly close-quarters team – the power glove and power sword.



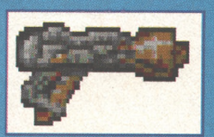
Now this is getting more like it – the very handsome heavy bolter.

A standard bolter – effective nonetheless.

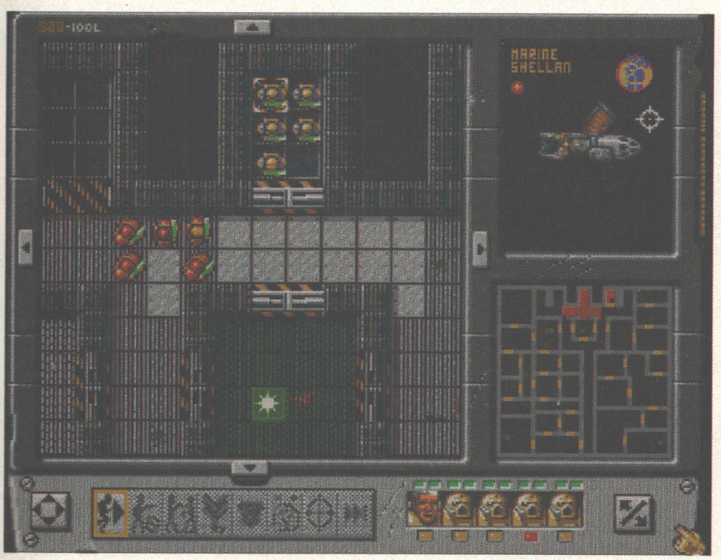


An assault cannon – a seriously high power piece of metal.

The missile launcher – heavy duty destruction.



A plasma gun – just watch those aliens fry!



The green star near the bottom of the map indicates that the alien hasn't been identified.

Letting loose a burst from the fearsome plasma cannon. I wonder how many that fries?

RUSADE

fruit knife. It's also wise at this point to check on what extra goodies can be picked up.

A junior commander will have access to one piece of extra equipment – a medical kit or bionic arm or whatever – and one order, such as telling his men to fire twice during one turn in a sortie. As you go up in rank, more extras become available and can certainly turn the tables in tougher missions.

LET'S KICK SOME ALIEN BUTT

Once armed, it's off to the docking claw, where the main playscreen pops up to show the layout of the spacecraft in which you'll be fighting. The whole scenario is shown in miniature on a sub-screen while a close-up tactical screen gives a top-down view of your immediate surroundings. But beware – aliens lurk round every corner and will only show when they're in visual range or if you scan for them. And there's a whole bunch of nasties to be encountered, each with individual means of attack.

Moving out of the claw, the initial feeling is that the gameplay plods along, and could easily become tedious – each member of each team has to be moved in turn, after all. Cast such thoughts aside though – it soon becomes apparent that this is *meant* to play like a board game, step by step, and will soon have your brain out of blast-'em-up mode and into something more pondering and strategic.

It's now that the relevance of the different weapon types becomes apparent. Each type has different firing characteristics and each member of the chapter has a different range of movement which depends on the weight of equipment he's lugging around. This, combined with the welter of different alien types, adds greatly to the game's strategic depth.

Care must be taken when getting your men into the best attacking position, lest you end up blowing members of your own chapter away by having them stand too near a rocket strike. This really pummels the grey matter, which justifies the slow pace of the gameplay as you'll spend more time racking your brains than charging around willy-nilly.

The controls are intuitive to use – click on 'move' and the movement range of that marine will show up on the screen, all you have to do is click on the destination square – and, like the board game, dice rolls take care of combat when you end up within range of an alien. There's also an option for hand-to-hand fighting, which takes offensive and defensive dice rolls into account and, on occasion, you can re-roll to try to improve your score.

Where the game really works is with its use of graphics. When fighting an alien, the screen flips to an isometric view in which you can see your marine shoot and, if the dice roll is high enough, the alien explode in a burst of animated flame, accompanied by jolly little 'boosh'.

After scrabbling your way through to the mission's objective, with hassle all the way from those heavy alien bozos, the chapter has to return to the docking claw before the number of turns allowed runs out or they'll all die. Panic? You betcha. A cool head is needed if you're going to get your commander back for his de-briefing. It's all too easy to get the marines strung out all over the place, easy prey for the green and slimies.

Once home and safe, you're told how well, or badly, it all went and given honour badges based on the points scored for the mission. Each commander can be saved to disk ready for another mission too. Gremlin says there will be data disks available – adding to the 12 missions already included – which makes this a game that will grow and grow.

GAME OVER, MAN, GAME OVER

In all, *Space Crusade* retains much of the original feel of the board game, but the computer format adds some great touches you'd be hard pressed to imitate physically, short of tipping lighter fluid over the board characters and lighting them as they get blown away. As was the point in the original game system, the emphasis is on simple strategy and on *not* getting bogged down by a multitude of tedious irrelevancies (roll die to save against poison gas/tripping up/whatever). Each mission can be approached in a completely different way and you can use just one or two chapters to make things that much more tricky. Also, the prospect of more missions is a great plus.

My only gripe is that you don't get the opportunity to play the aliens, but then, if you can beat 'em, why join 'em?

KNOW YOUR PLACE

Some rudimentary tips for DIY genocide.

Positioning the marines for best effect takes a bit of forethought. Invariably, the mission's objective is at the opposite end of the screen to the docking claws, so you'll have to devise strategies of movement that will ensure you move swiftly towards it without getting hemmed in by aliens.

The first lesson you'll learn is that the marines are carrying some very dangerous equipment. Land a rocket on an alien standing next to one of your own chaps and they'll both blow up. Also, watch out with that plasma cannon. The bolt has an irritating tendency to zap straight through the alien and take out the marine standing behind it. Not very clever.

A good strategy when playing with three teams is to assign one as the advance party, backed up by team two to set up a crossfire with the plasma cannon and rockets, while team three takes up the rear and closes doors behind it to stop weapon attacks from behind. And if you can draw the aliens into a tight bunch, use the bolter-armed marines to shield the guys with the launchers while they fire rockets into the enemy's midst.

Also, don't go firing off orders without thought. You can only use an order once in the mission and having the men able to, for example, fire, run away, fire again and close the door behind them may just save their respective rashers.

Choosing the methods of destruction with the weapons selection screen.

UPPERS The level of strategy is deep with a capital EEP and there's enough fun in the graphics department to cater for those who would rather watch aliens explode than spend time trying to get their brains into gear.

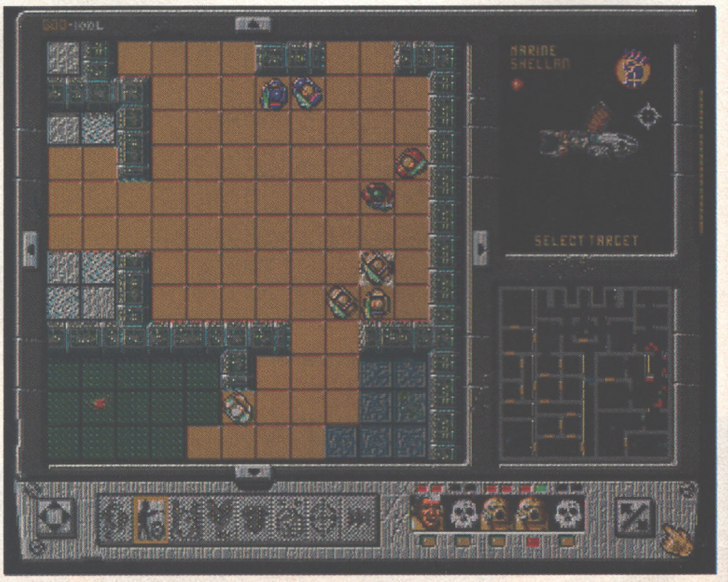
DOWNERS The sound effects aren't up to much – aside from explosions, all you're treated to is the occasional alien growl. It would be nice if the on-screen figures could point in the direction they're shooting.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A great board game conversion. It'll have your alien-hating tendencies thoroughly tickled for hours and hours.

85 PERCENT

The aliens in this room are heavily outnumbered – look, we've just fried another one!



Firing the missile launcher – the highlighted yellow squares indicate the weapon's range.

VROOM

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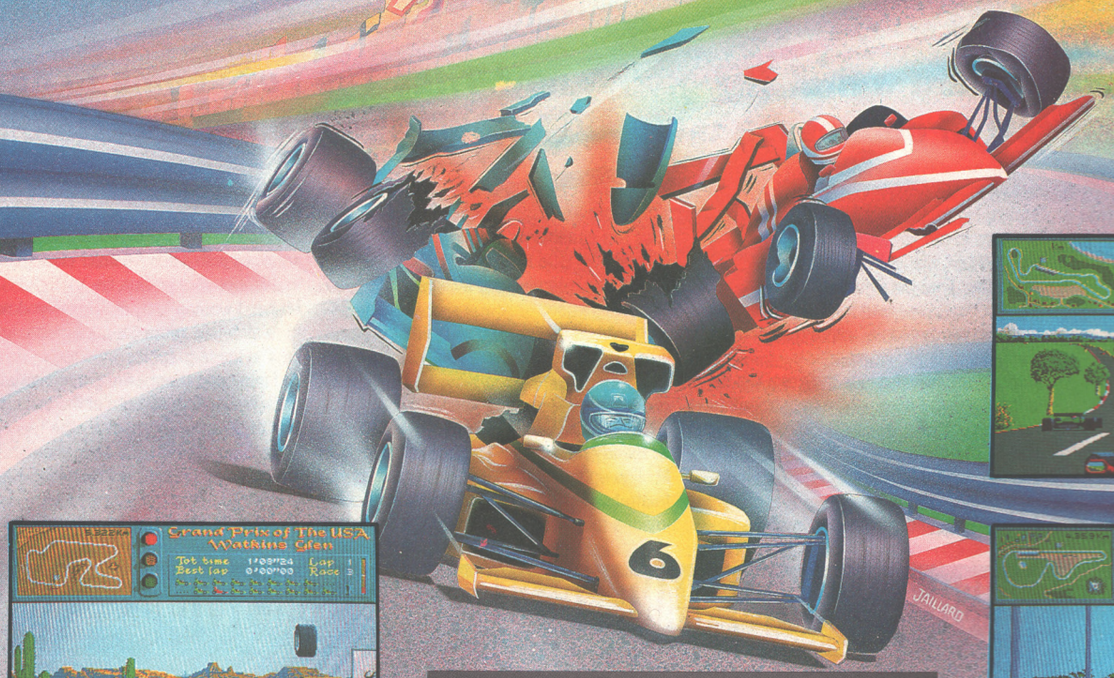

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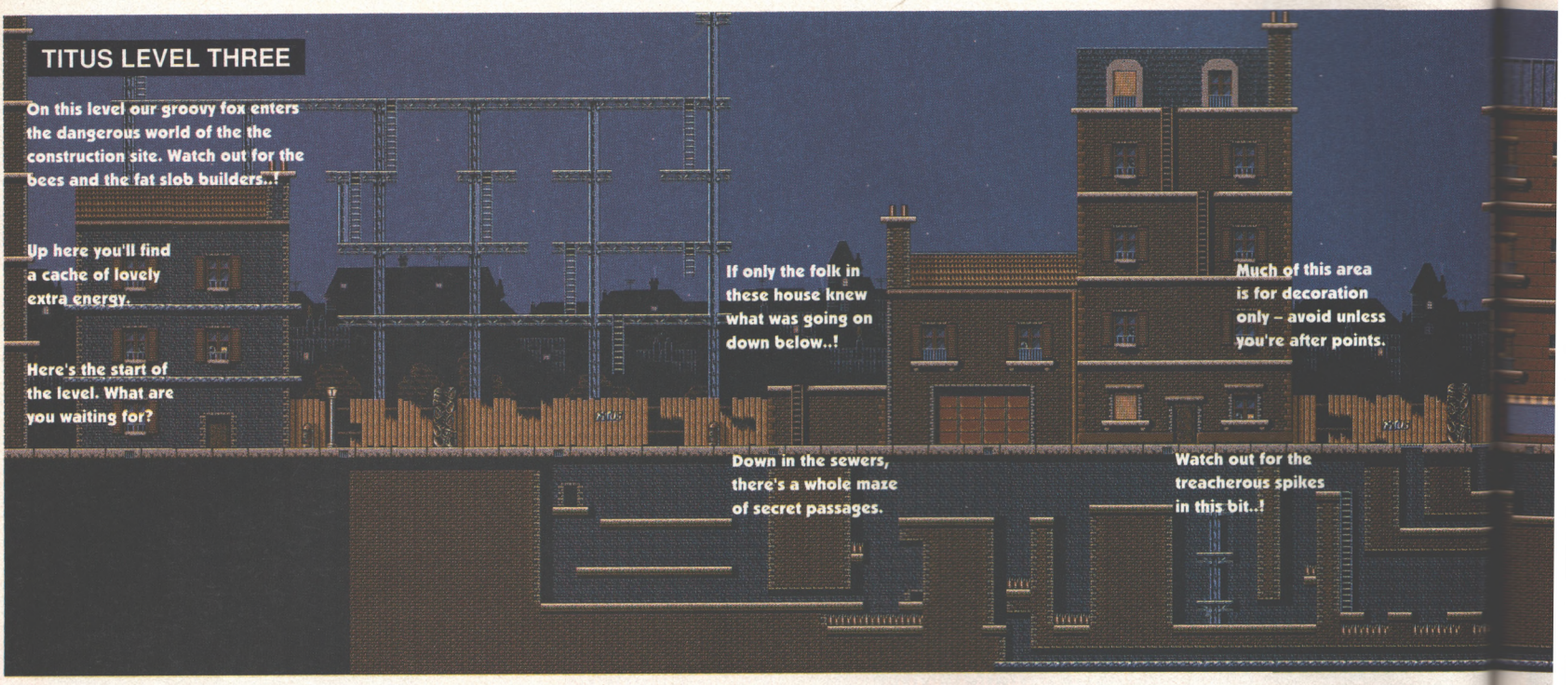


TITUS THE

And they say the French are weird! The groovy new *Titus The Fox* seems to have generated a similar sort of oddness in the AMIGA POWER reviewing department...

Game: Titus The Fox
Publisher: Titus
Price: £25.99
Authors: Carlo Penconti (programming), Francis Fournier and Didier Carrere (graphics), Christophe Feure (music)
Release: Out now

One quiet day in the AMIGA POWER offices:
Mark: Hey Stuart, have you seen this? It's that groovy new *Titus The Fox* game from Titus. Waddya reckon then?
Stuart: Hmm. Looks a bit like *The Blues Brothers* to me.
Mark: Yeah, but look at that central character. That fox is just sooo cute.
Stuart: Well, yes – but how many games have we seen recently with a really cute fox in them, but no gameplay?
Mark: True, true. I guess the proof will be in the playing. I think you're right about the similarity with *The Blues Brothers* – I just hope it's better than that. For some reason that game did nothing for me – it just didn't feel or look right.
Stuart: Hey, that's fighting talk where I come from – *Blues* was one of the games of the year as far as I'm concerned! Still, Titus are confidently claiming that this IS even better. One French mag even called it 'The new reference for all types of platform games'.
Mark: Wow, that's no small claim. Let's load it up and see if they're right..!

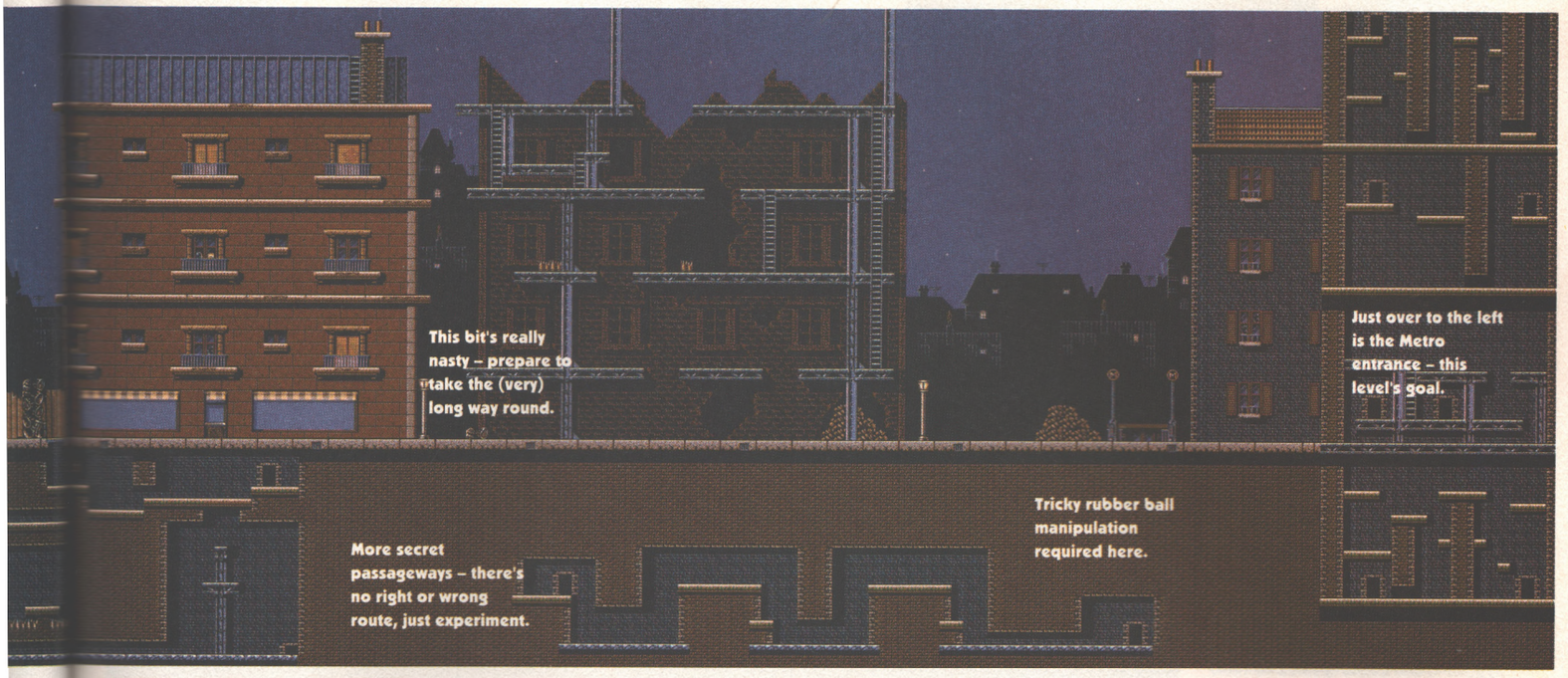
SOME TIME LATER...

S: Bloody hell, it's a bit tricky, innit?
M: Too right. But I like a game with a bit of frustration in it. It's nice to be jumping for joy one minute, then punching the walls in frustration the next.
S: Yeah, but that's enough about your private life. Don't you get just a little bit too annoyed with it sometimes? (The game, that is, not your private life.)
M: No, I wouldn't say so. I think you need to relax a little more Stuart. I mean, just look at those graphics.
S: I can't see them – I'm getting so laid back I'm looking straight at the ceiling.
M: Oh boy. Sure, graphics aren't everything. But when a slick, mean thing looks like this, I think we're talking a bit of a winner.
S: Actually, I can't argue with you there at

THE FREAKS AND FIENDISH FOES WHO WANT TO SEE TITUS' FUR FLYING...

Not everyone loves our foxy little hero. In fact, it sometimes seems like there's no end to the bad guys who don't want him to rescue his sweetheart in Marrakech.

And whadaya know, but here're some of them now. Only *some*, mind – this is just a small selection of the bad dudes, evil animals and vicious monsters out to thwart our bushy-tailed pal. What they didn't count on, though, was young Titus being cunning as a, um, fox – he can actually pick up some of his adversaries and throw them around (!), using them as weapons against the other bad guys.



FOX

all. It's a lush looker and no mistake, and it's all incredibly fast and smooth too. In fact, some people might even find it a bit TOO fast...

M: (Now who's talking about their private life?) You thought *Harlequin* was a bit of a classic last month. How do you reckon this compares?

S: Like a double decker bus compares to a 64-piece dinner service. They're really completely different types of game. *Titus* is a pure arcade game, with a bit of object manipulation but none of the depth of *Harlequin*'s puzzle-solving adventurama.

A GAME RIDDLED WITH HOLES?

M: Hey, I see what you mean about some of those tricky bits, though. It's a mighty good job they included that option to slow everything down. You know, the...

Matt Bielby: Stop slagging off *Magic Pockets*!

S: Who let him in? Seriously though, it can be a real boon in some of the nastier bits to take things at half the pace, especially when you're on your last couple of bits of energy with a restart point just ahead. Actually that's another one of the game's good points – restarts are scattered pretty liberally through the levels, usually just after the toughest bits, so at least you don't have to keep doing them over and over again. The password system is quite innovative too, giving you a code for each level, but hiding it away somewhere within the level itself so that you have to go exploring if you want it.

M: Yeah, the restart points are cool, particularly with that loading system.

Born to be wild – the unstoppable Titus glides on down with the aid of his super sexy Magic Flying Carpet. Marrakech here we come!

S: Oh God, don't talk to me about that loading system! I'm not sure why it should take such an eternity to load each level (especially some of the really short ones at the start), and it's a bit ridiculous to have to load the music and sound effects in every time as well.

M: At least there's not much else to pick fault with presentation-wise. I wish they'd use the full screen, though. I'm sick of games which cater for the smaller American display. Still, mustn't grumble. The size of and variation between the levels is something else. There's a real feeling of progression in there – and that's enough to make you want to push on, to see what's next.

S: You're right there. In a way the game reminds me of *Hudson Hawk* in that respect – indeed in almost every respect come to that. The critical difference here, though, is in the playability.

M: Mmm, I know what you mean. *Hudson* could have been such a winner if it hadn't been for that horrible control. The fox is just so versatile, though. I love the way that the nasties can be picked up, and then used as weapons against the other bad guys. Sheer genius.

S: Bitch of a thing to actually do, though. *Titus* could do with being just a fraction more forgiving when it comes to precise positioning. Still, it does add to the slapstick knockabout feel of the thing.

M: Which reminds me – what's the difference between Matt Bielby and a computer?

S: I don't know, what IS the difference between Matt Bielby and a computer?

M: You only have to punch the information into the computer once!

S: Boom! Boom! (I'm glad you said that and not me, though. I like my job.)

M: I haven't laughed so much since last Friday's edition of Whose Line Is It Anyway...

S: ...especially that totally brilliant taxidermist sketch! The way that American comic just sat there, completely immobile, not responding to anything at all. In fact, it was just like...

Matt B: Look, I've told you two already, stop slagging *Magic Pockets*! And get on with the review.

M: Oh yeah. You know, there's something about the underground sub-levels that reminds me of *Rick Dangerous*. Except this isn't crap.

S: Don't talk to me about *Rick Dangerous*...

M: Don't worry, I think *Rick Dangerous* is about as much fun as the totally overrated *Xenon 2*.

S: Or *Kick Off 2*.

M: Solidarity, brothers. Oops, we better get back to the review (again). So, final scores on the doors for you, Stuart. Did the earth move?

S: Are you kidding? I thought I was playing in Sensurround (tm).

M: I'm not sure if I'd rate it as a classic. But for instant kicks, I reckon *Titus* is nearly up there with *Parasol Stars*.

S: I don't really think there's much point in comparing them, to be honest. This doesn't have the immediate appeal – the first levels are so short and simple, and the loading pauses between them so enormous, that you need a fair amount of self-discipline not to be completely put off at the beginning. Get past the first couple of stages though, and you're faced with levels so big and demanding that you'll be irresistibly drawn into a serious long-term challenge.

M: Mmm, maybe you're right. I've got a sneaky feeling we'll be playing *Titus* way into the summer, and maybe beyond. One thing's for sure though.

S: What's that, Mark?

M: They'll never let us do another review like this.

● ***STUART CAMPBELL & MARK RAMSHAW***

UPPERS Wonderful graphics, fabby toons and superbly designed levels – *Titus* seems to have it all. Maybe the best out-and-out Amiga platformer to date, even. The central character gives Sonic a real run for his money in the cute stakes, too. Any complaints, Stuart?

DOWNERS Only little ones, Mark. This is a tough enough game already without having bits where you fall through the floor without warning. And the loading's a real pain at the beginning. That's really about it, though. And I can forgive it those just for the character – he's absolutely gorgeous.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A worthy successor to *The Blues Brothers*, though *Titus* doesn't perhaps improve significantly on its parent. It's just as good, but in different ways – so it's definitely worth owning both. Whatever, it's certainly worth a good...

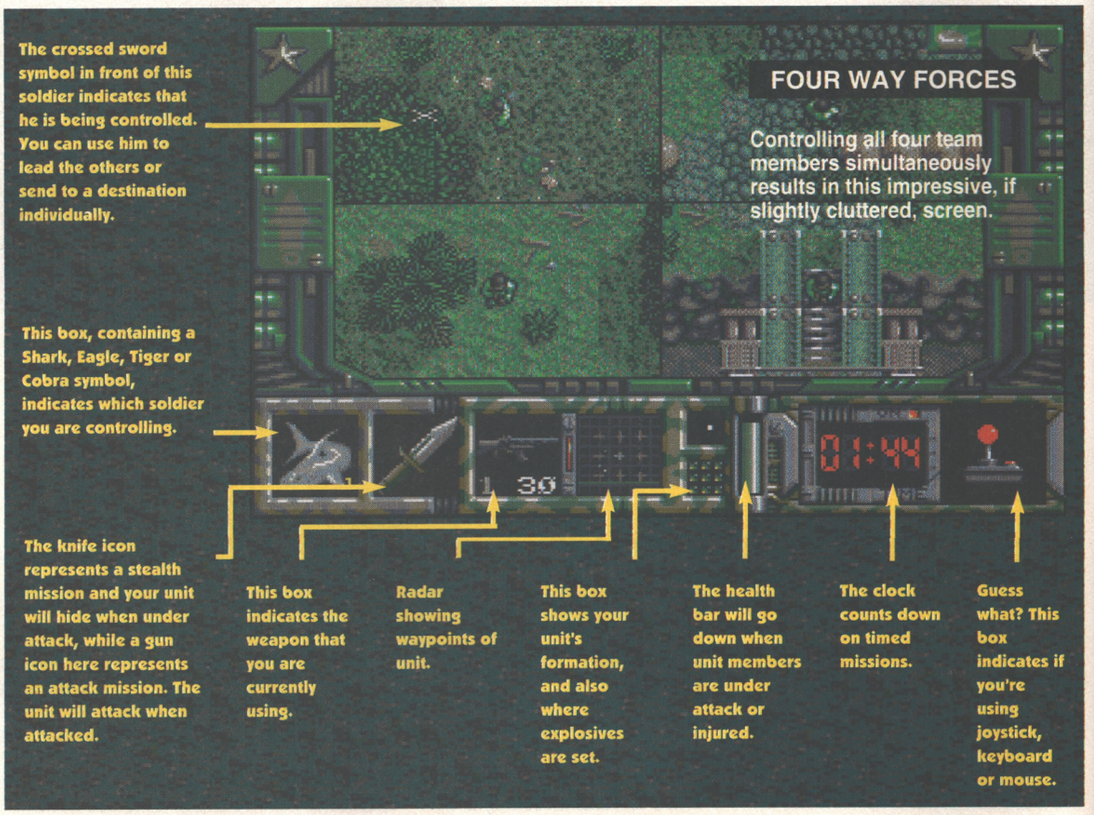
88 PERCENT

SPECIAL

MicroProse give their epic 3D flight sims a rest to take us on a trip deep into enemy territory, *Airborne Ranger*-style. But is *Special Forces* really that special?

Game: Special Forces
Publisher: MicroProse
Price: £34.99
Author: Sleepless Knights
Release: Out now

MicroProse haven't put a foot wrong in recent months – indeed, what other publisher could boast such an unbroken stream of top quality products throughout the last year? Not Mindscape, not Psygnosis, and certainly not Electronic Arts – so it was with eager anticipation that I snatched the chance to review this newie. It's one of their military-strategy-with-action-bits games, a spiritual descendent of the ageing *Airborne Ranger* – and as such perhaps not of the same surefire hit quality as great simulations like *Knights of the Sky* or *Formula One Grand Prix* – though expectations still ran high. This, then, is the story of how a MicroProse game teased me, confused me, and eventually disappointed me, and as such won't make for pretty reading. This is *not* a game I had fun with.

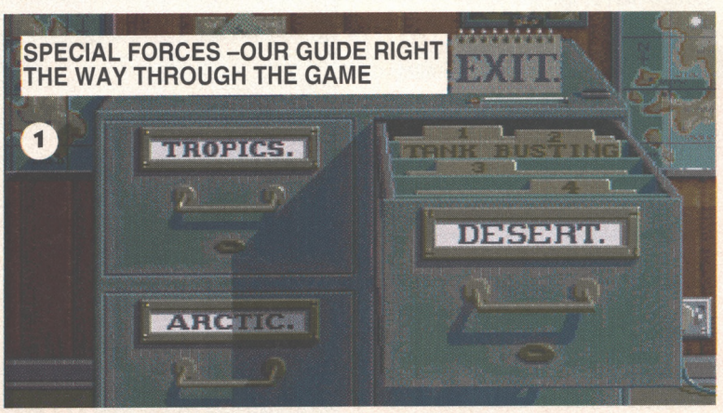


FIRST BLOOD – THE FIRST CHAPTER

But first, what's it all about? Newish readers will probably be having real problems at this point – if it's a MicroProse game, how come it doesn't have solid 3D graphics, I can hear them asking – so it's probably best explained as an elaborately executed strategy game. Following a game style established in *Airborne Ranger*, *Special Forces* put you in charge of a small team of elite troops, teaches you how to control them, and then launches you into a series of missions, each with its own environment to explore and individual skills to be mastered.

The introductory sequence boasts only average animation, despite the scenes being effectively illustrated, and this unfortunately sets the pace. It shows the *Special Forces* chopper flying to its destination, dropping off your four soldiers (they abseil to the ground, then walk off into the jungle) before finishing on a military style screen of the *Special Forces* logo being shot to bits with machine gun fire. Very ho hum stuff.

Immediately after, though, things get briefly better. This being a MicroProse game, there are certainly a wealth of options on offer – including four levels of mission difficulty to select. The first batch of missions, dubbed 'conscript', give you targets clearly mapped out for you before you set off, badly equipped and ill-trained opponents, and should generally be a breeze to complete. Less so the 'regular' missions, where objectives are given using



MISSION SELECT. This here filing cabinet is where you pick your favourite mission.

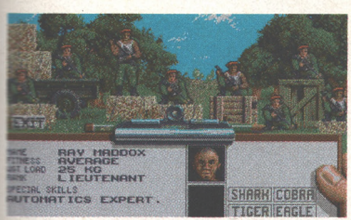
Then you go to this map, which shows you the various drop off points for your unit.

FORCES

The respectable, if unspectacular, intro sequence sets the scene nicely. Cue obscure Stan Ridgeway song.

Hey, why don't we take another look at the our Special Forces 'copter flying over the jungle? Here it comes...

Our team of dumbly-named heroes shimmy down some ropes, and straight into the conflict below. Hurrah!



It is a good idea to bear in mind what is required of a mission when selecting your team, as each chap has specialist skills.

a grid reference system and the enemy are trained but inexperienced. Once you have mastered the first two levels things get really serious though – the 'veteran' scenarios provide mission objectives not shown on your maps and put you up against highly skilled experienced soldiers. And if you think that sounds tough, wait until you get to the 'elite' section...

Once you've chosen your difficulty level it's onto the mission screen, and, more specifically, to a filing cabinet containing four drawers, marked Tropics, Arctic, Desert and Temperate. Click on one of these and it opens to reveal four mission documents. Pick the one you fancy – it could be destroying drug rings, blowing up scud units or busting tanks – then whiz off to select the squad of soldiers you'll be sending on the mission. A quick read through the various blokes' stats, an even quicker allocation of code names (a choice of Shark, Cobra, Tiger and Eagle) and you're off. You pick a squad of eight and then decide which four to take on any one mission – if any get killed, you've obviously got rather fewer to chose between next time round. Only when all eight guys are dead do you get to restock your squad of guys.

FIRST BLOOD – THE SECOND CHAPTER

Hold your itchy feet just a minute though – we're not ready to take the mission just yet! (What d'you think this is, an arcade game?) First you've got to rig the boys up with a choice of guns and ammo. An anti-tank mission, for instance, will require a goodly selection of remotely detonateable explosives – though, of course, you can go for the default selections if you're feeling lazy. And that's basically it – your team is now ready for the war zone. Time to pick the point where you want your chopper to drop the boys off.

"Plenty of scope to the missions"

Oi! Wake up, you 'orrible lot! Yes, you who've been dozing for the last few paragraphs, it's time to sit up and pay attention – we're about to get into the actual game now. The whole thing operates using a top-down plan view of the small area around your troops. In looks it all treads a fine line between an arcade game style and 'realism' – MicroProse have coloured your unit to blend very nicely into the forest background in their natty green outfits, while at the same time making sure the sprites are bold enough that they don't get completely lost in the undergrowth. You could argue that, visually, it's a little dull, but MicroProse's audience is one that would react badly to anything that smacked of *Commando* or similar, and I think they've drawn the line rather well.

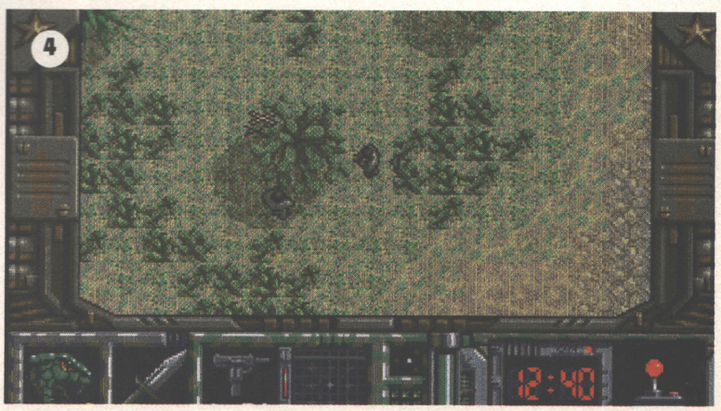
Clarity could be better, however – some objects (targets like Scud missile carriers and tanks, particularly) are very clear on screen, though other bits get confusing and force you to keep referring back to the map. Your lead man (it can be any of the four) is indicated by a crossed swords symbol – you simply move it around with the joystick and he (and, if you've selected them, the others) will follow.

Choosing between your weapons and swapping them around for each soldier is easy and efficient – tapping a single key will cycle through the weapon icons at the bottom of the screen – and while animation and so on is generally less than spectacular, it's perfectly serviceable. However, this degree of usability isn't carried through to the rest of the controls, a point we'll get onto in a minute.

TEAM SPIRIT AND ALL THAT STUFF

Perhaps the most important single aspect of the game is that you're meant to split your men up and control them all separately, constantly juggling between them as the game progresses. Unlike in many FRPs and similar, though, you get the chance to →

Tiger (that's him near the cross) plants remote explosives next to an enemy tank.

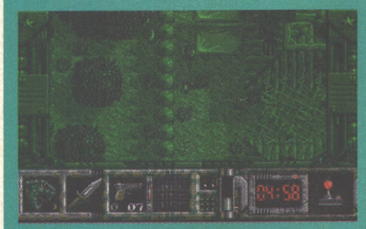


Tiger and Cobra take cover so they don't get trashed in the explosion themselves.

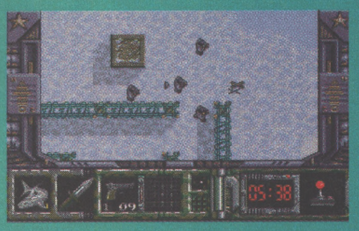
JOURNEY TO THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH...

Special Forces **gives you four different climatic areas from which to pick between, each with a selection of missions. And they are...**

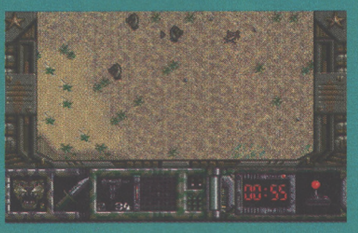
TROPICAL – packed to the forest canopy with evil drug barons, private armies and so on. Oh yes, and trees.



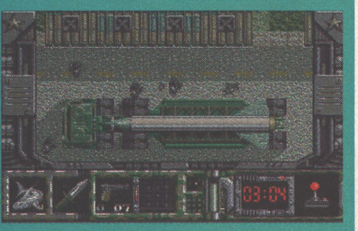
ARCTIC – here the local guerrillas use the freezing conditions to their advantage, so be on your guard.

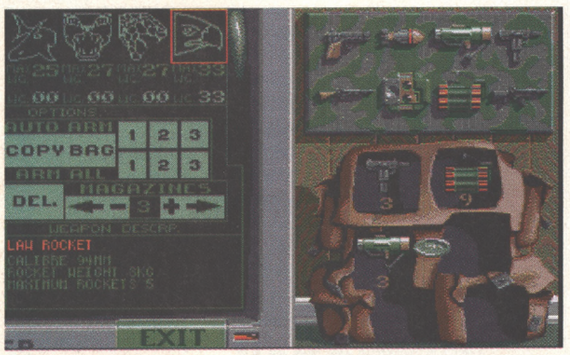


DESERT – there's plenty of tank busting to be found here, Gulf War-style. 'Rock The Casbah' indeed.



TEMPERATE – here you'll find plenty evil businessmen, lots of Scud missiles to destroy, and so on.





When you get to the weapons shop choose the right weapons for the mission and the unit members' specialist skills.

see all four men at once even when they're not travelling together – the screen can be split into four quarters, each mini-window showing the individual position of each team member. There are no labels or symbols on each of these to inform you who's who though, which means you're going to spend a while mucking about with the function keys while you try to gain control of the soldier you want. Once you're used to it, this function supplies the core of the game's interest – keeping track of each of your four little men, making sure they're all safe and all serving a useful task in the mission, is where it comes alive. If only they'd paid a bit more attention to the intuitiveness to the control, you can't help but wondering, we'd have had quite a game on our hands here...

That's the problem, you see – you're going to have to be a dab hand at juggling joystick/mouse with keyboard if you're going to get anything out of this game. The basic game is simple, rather old fashioned even – effectively the same thing as an RPG like *Shadowlands*, but without all the imaginative possibilities magic brings – but with so many different keys controlling so many functions it all becomes much more complex than is friendly or, indeed, it needs to be. With most of the keyboard functions presented as on-screen icons instead, which could be selected with a click of the mouse or joystick, it would become a much more accessible game. As it is, managing to successfully combine moving all four guys with keeping tabs on the main map screens with sussing out enemy positions with goodness-knows-what is possible, but demands a degree of co-ordination and frustration-resistance beyond most of us.

"Not a game I had fun with"

APOCALYPSE ANY MOMENT NOW

Conclusion time, then. *Special Forces* does have a fair amount going for it – some professional presentation, a lot of variety in the different levels (16 missions to choose from across four climatic regions), plenty of options and moments of high drama and great excitement. However, it also has a number of problems – it's actually a fairly simple game idea deliberately over-complicated with options, unfriendly controls and so on, and it's obviously not quite sure about whether it wants to be an arcade game or a strategy thing. It walks an uneasy line between the two, and in doing so – both in concept and execution – falls well short of what we've come to expect from MicroProse. They have never seemed very comfortable when they've moved away from military equipment simulations, and nothing's changed here. Only really recommendable if you're absolutely, positively certain you like 'that sort of thing.'

● *MATTHEW SQUIRES*

UPPERS An updated *Airborne Ranger*, and as such a Godsend for fans. There's plenty of variety and scope to the different missions on offer here, the usual MicroProse array of options adding depth to something highly reminiscent of a po-faced RPG, but without the magic.

DOWNERS Unimaginative sound effects and graphics disappoint, but it's the ill thought out complexity of the controls that really do the playability no favours. Underneath it all, a very old fashioned game.

THE BOTTOM LINE MicroProse have never looked happy with non-simulation games, and it doesn't look like the old dog's learned any new tricks here. Not exactly ill-thought-out, but certainly a very average and unenthralling military shoot'-em-up/strategy game thingy.

69 PERCENT

Explosion of the tanks can only be seen on the area map. There's one, top right.

Once the mission is completed, pick up your team with a chopper. Here comes one now.

Hook™

PETER PAN has now grown up, far away from NEVERLAND, but his old enemy CAPTAIN HOOK has not forgotten and schemes his revenge.

Kidnapping Peter's children, he lures our hero back to the Island of PIRATES and "LOST BOYS" for a final confrontation.

With the help of TINKERBELL the faithful fairy, you take on the role of PETER in this magic adventure fraught with danger and excitement.

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After the slickness AND substance of *Leander*, Psygnosis' newie disappoints.

ORK

Game: Ork
Publisher: Psygnosis
Price: £25.99
Authors: Wayne Smithson and Kevin Oxland
Release: Out now

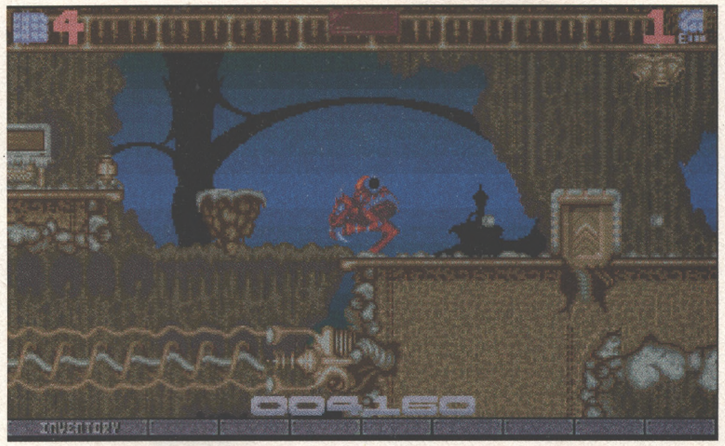
After the innovative genius of *Lemmings*, the slickness of *Leander* and the adrenalin-pumping bite of *The Killing Game Show*, this is a bit of a disappointment. An uninspired (or just busy elsewhere?) Psygnosis have resorted to their well-used parallax-scrolling platform-adventure generator once again, and in doing so have come up with a nice looking game which fails to excite on any other level. It's not bad, just uninspired.

Okay, so maybe it's unfair to expect great products every time from a company just because it's got a decent pedigree, but sometimes it's hard to help yourself. Playing *Ork* is kind of like opening your copy of the National Enquirer to discover that without the make-up, the wigs, the morgage-humbling clothes and the big-time tooth-paint, Julia Roberts (if we're being completely honest) looks just like any other gal.

Don't get me wrong, there's nothing actually *wrong* with *Ork*, much in the same way that a hung-over Ms Roberts would still cause a considerable stir in the local chippie. It's just sad that underneath all the gloss and polish, there's really not much here that could truly be described as special.

"In the ranks of seen-it-all-before"

But anyway, let's dissect the game. For a start, the three-layer parallax scrolling scenery would look at home on a Megadrive, and provides an impressive (yet unobtrusive) background for some slick character animation. There's a fair amount of variation in the walk-jump-fall platform-explore-'em-up gameplay too (at certain points you get to zoom about the levels with a jet-pack. Coo!) and there's a decent showing of gameplay 'extras' dutifully dotted around the place in vintage Psygnosis fashion.



Land on that energy beam at your peril! There are four continues at your disposal, but *Ork* soon gets tough so you'd better take care not to waste them. Here you've reached a dead-end, so maybe it's time to find a launch-pad and start exploring the heavens...

In fact, on first inspection you'd be forgiven for thinking there's nothing missing here. Graphics? It's got 'em. Sound effects? Hmm, nothing special – and there's no real soundtrack – but they'll do. Challenge? Well, the game's big enough. Anything remotely inventive? Ah...

COMMITTING THE ORIGINAL SIN

And there's the problem. There's just nothing new, ground-breaking or even just plain *perfect* about *Ork*.

Quickly scan through the instruction booklet, and you soon realise that the game plot is spookily similar to that of *The Killing Game Show*. That's no real problem, Psygnosis seem to be saying. *The Killing Game Show* wasn't at all bad, so why not deal up more of the same? (OK, so this time you're an aspiring cadet within the ranks of the Heyadahl space-fleet, as opposed to a convicted criminal. And this time you're facing your final test, in true James T Kirk style, before being promoted to the rank of captain, as opposed to fighting for your freedom, but these are just plot details. The means to your end is the same.)

To be more specific, the means to your end is to wander around a series of platform-ridden levels in search of a key object (or series of objects) that will enable your escape to the next bit. Each level progressively requires more complex exploration, as different items need to be

THAT ORK-WARD FIRST LEVEL IN FULL

Let's take a close look at how to get through that bewildering first level. Its arrival is heralded by an atmospheric introductory shot.

And here's that atmospheric introductory shot in full. Nice, isn't it. Ho-hum. Had enough? Good, let's move on...

You then find yourself plopped down straight into the middle of the action, without the foggiest idea of what to look for, what to do, or, um, *anything* really. Here, then, are a few little hints'n'tips to help you get started...

Straight into the fray, and our hero finds his robosuited self conveniently placed right next to a terminal. He can't use it yet though, because he has no objects and he hasn't turned on the scanner.

After a few minutes of exploration, you find a key. This is just bound to come in useful later on so you might as well pick it up. You can carry up to eight things at once, so it won't weigh you down.

A few more giant leaps for mankind later, and a locked gate bars the way between you and a whole stack of gold. Now what was it you found a moment ago? (Checks inventory.) Ah yes, that key...

The cunning trick with the key (what powers of deduction, eh?) worked like a dream. As the proud owner of some recently-acquired gold, it's time to find the next obstacle.

Ah-ha. Thought as much. Drop the gold by the sign post, the gate opens and it's time to progress to the next level. Now that was level one, a nice 'n' easy introduction to the hassles you'll encounter in...

...level two! Another nice introductory still sets the tone, then once again it's straight into the thick of things. Except now you have a jet-pack to play with and a few brain-aching sub quests to negotiate...

SOMETHING IN THE WATER DOES NOT COMPUTE...

Computers don't just play games, you know. Oh no...

In fact some computers can be very useful. Take this terminal here for example – one of many you'll find dotted around the game. Taking advantage of it could prove very useful – indeed, essential – to completing the game. Say you've managed to find yourself a spherical object, for instance – as you have here. The computer will give a hint as to what it could be used for. Like so:

So, it could be the key to unlocking some sort of barrier, could it? If you remember to keep an eye out for objects-obviously-in-need-of-other-objects along the way, it's fairly easy to put the jigsaw together.

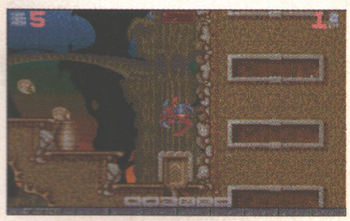
In this case, there was that socket contraption just by the start. Now a ball would fit in there quite neatly, don't you think? So stand behind the socket, drop the ball, and hey-presto...

The energy-beam shield is turned off and a whole new section of level is there for the exploring! And it doesn't end here. A few more puzzles solved, and you'll have cracked the second task in no time at all!

Now this guy looks as if he's in need of something, but at the moment you have no idea what. Just keep searching and exploring, I guess, though checking with the computer for clues could maybe help you discover his secret...

A computer speaks... "Life-force systems –73% complete". And then adds, just to bring you back down to earth (or wherever the hell we are, exactly) "Percentage of game completed – 10%". Ah well, better just soldier on then.

OK then computer, let's see what you've got to say about this. "When placed in proper receptacle will disengage laser doorways." So, it would appear that our hero has found himself another key. But for which door?



Jump on to a launch pad (that's one right underneath you) and you can fly. Fuel is limited, and you have to land on another platform, so don't zoom about the place just for the fun of it – make your air time count. In this case, get out of the caves.

used at relevant points to help with your escape. In other words, the levels are divided into sub-quests that need to be solved in a strict order. Oh yes, and all this in a robo-module that, like *The Killing Game Show* one, bears an uncanny resemblance to ED-209.

Unfortunately the similarities start to grind to a halt around here. There's little of the sense of urgency that accompanied *Killing Game Show*, for instance – there's no groovy soundtrack, there's no 'instant replay' feature (a real shame – why didn't that idea catch on?) and there's little spark. Instead, there are a series of token gameplay novelties.

For example, at one point on each level you'll find a computer terminal. Stand behind the terminal, hit fire to boot up, and a whole array of utilities are suddenly at your disposal.

There's the 'object analysis' feature, which you to submit any unidentified object you may have collected along the way to computer-aided scrutiny. What the terminal's conclusion may lack in Hugh Scully charm and materialistic 'how-much-should-I-insure-it-for?' opinion, it makes up for in practical use. For instance, it will hint as to where certain objects need to be used – and in roughly what order – if your escape bid is to be successful.

THAT SHERILYN FENN FACTOR

This is actually very useful. As the game progresses, you'll find yourself in the possession of all sorts of weird and wonderful objects, but with no clear idea of how to use them. The first level is simple. Find the key to unlock the gold store, then pay the toll-keeper at the end of the level with the gold. Easy enough, but the plot soon reaches Twin Peaks complexity in later levels as you have to get your head around a whole Argos catalogue of potentially-crucial objects, seemingly littered around the scenery at random.

Another helpful feature available at the terminal is a scanner. This will flash up a section of map, helpfully pointing out your location – but only after you've activated the scanner module found elsewhere on the level. There's also a save/continue game option, a life-force indicator and a percentage display of how far through the game you've explored.

And then there's (hurrah!) the jet pack. Your first chance to play with this comes on level two. Fuel is limited (although you can pick plenty more up along the way), so it's a good idea to plan your route in advance. This is fun, and carefully deciding when to get airborne is crucial to success.

We're running right up to the end of the page, so I'd better be brief. The point is, it's all very well, but these few novelties don't really combine to rescue *Ork* from the ranks of the seen-it-all-before. It's very slick, it plays well and looks good. But that's just about your lot. There's nothing extra to it, nothing special, and although you won't feel ripped of if you buy it, neither will you feel inclined to add it to your list of favourite games. For my money, the game doesn't do the graphics justice – it's mutton dressed up as lamb.

● *NEIL WEST*

THE PARALLAX THAT TIME FORGOT

The main display of Ork. Here the hero is accessing a computer terminal, which brings up a display at the bottom of the screen, like so.

A lone pterodactyl flaps overhead as our hero lurks behind yet another computer terminal. While accessing the computer's data banks, he's still at the mercy of any enemies that may be lurking around on the surface, so take care. The heart-beat monitor at the top of the screen pulses rhythmically, and weakens as our armour-clad hero takes hits.

UPPERS The graphics are up to the usual Psygnosis standard, with animation and parallax scrolling to match. The game incorporates a puzzle element as you have to figure out what to use when – there are plenty of gameplay 'extras' to get to grips with.

DOWNERS But there's just nothing new here. *Ork* is neither gripping or thrilling, and you get the sense that the programming team have really just been going through the same old (albeit highly professional) motions.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Nothing to fire the imagination, but a slick, finely polished game nevertheless. A poor relation to *The Killing Game Show*, *Ork* never comes near to capturing the same spark. It's a shame, but there you go.

66 PERCENT

Game: Hare Raising Havoc
Publisher: Disney
Author: Karl Robillard
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

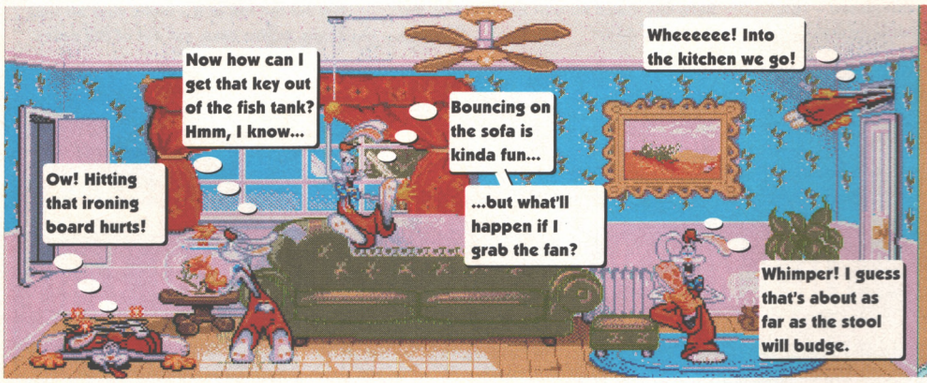
ROGER'S RATHER VARIED COLLECTION OF LITTLE 'PICK ME UPS'

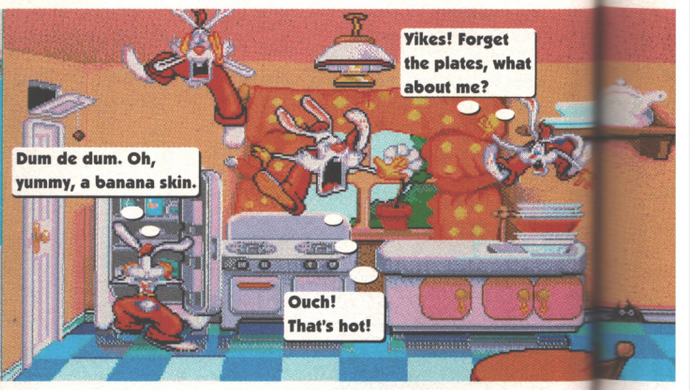
It's all a case of using the right object in the right place. Here's a selection of some objects and icons...

Time remaining | A piece of cheese | Extra time | A canny key | Cartoon magnet | Soap

Opinion is split in the AP office this month. That's why, in this once only special,

HARE RAIS





As a well-known bowl of petunias once said, "Oh no, not again". After suffering the dismal *Space Ace II* in issue 10, the last thing I wanted to see was another multi-disk cartoon extravaganza with astonishing graphics and almost invisible gameplay. But wait! *Hare Raising Havoc* is different! Oh yeah?

Well, for a start, there's no more of that perpetual disk-swapping stuff – this game comes on six floppies, but you only have to swap them round once, and that's when you install the game onto your hard drive. Yes, that's right, *Hare Raising Havoc* simply won't allow you to play from the floppies, so ignore the small print on the box at your peril. Bye bye, the 80 percent of Amiga owners with no hard drive. (And hello to the other 20 percent, all those serious types who use their machines for 'proper' things like word-processing and accounting and stuff like that. Lots of Roger Rabbit fans among their ranks, I'll bet.)

On the bottom half of the page there, Mark might tell you that this is different from *Space Ace* and the other games of that Don Bluth ilk because it gives you freedom of movement around the screen and hence much more involvement in the game. Believe him about the freedom of movement, but don't trust him about the game. In *Space Ace*, you watch an animation for a while, then have to make a decision on a simple joystick movement to progress. In *Hare Raising Havoc*, you still have to do the simple joystick-movement bit, but you get to fill in the walking-between-problems bit yourself. Big fat hairy deal. Roger's cartoon logic doesn't even give you a clue as to what to do next, which means even more guesswork is involved than in the Bluth games.

"Ah, but the graphics and animation and sound, they're just incredible!" Tosh. The graphics are sweet, but are they really a significant improvement on the Garfield games of several years back? I don't think

Games reviews, just like (phew!) rock'n'roll, are a very subjective thing. It's a fact which often gets forgotten, but the fact that Stuart's opinion of *Hare Raising Havoc* differs so greatly from mine proves it, I'd say. So just why do I disagree with Stuart's opinions, to the point where we both feel the need to review the game? Well, let's start right at the beginning.

Hare Raising Havoc is a one meg only game, which adds insult to injury by requiring a hard drive (almost unbelievably, it CANNOT be played from floppies at all!), and even has a code wheel. All of this is enough to prejudice anyone against it almost immediately.

HARE RESTORING

Installing the bloody thing takes forever, and the instructions don't really give much of an idea what is going on. But, having established the fact that it requires a hardware setup which most people simply don't have, it's only fair to judge it purely on its own merits. Penalising something for the hardware it requires isn't really fair.

Okay, so to the game itself. It's an 'interactive cartoon' for want of a better cliché. But that doesn't mean we're in laser disc conversion territory (no crappy *Space Ace* routines here – despite what Stuart might tell you). The player actually gets to control the Roger Rabbit sprite, moving him around one location at a time, manipulating objects, in an attempt to escape.

Now the movement isn't exactly speedy, and is restricted to left, right, up and down. There's no moving into and out of the screen, for instance, and object manipulation is similarly simplistic.

Pressing the fire button near an object or piece of scenery will cause an effect (turn the cooker on/off, pick up the magnet etc). It's basically a case of trial and error to find all the necessary objects, then move and use everything in order to escape to the next screen. The ultimate objective, by the way, is to recover Baby Herman before mother gets back.

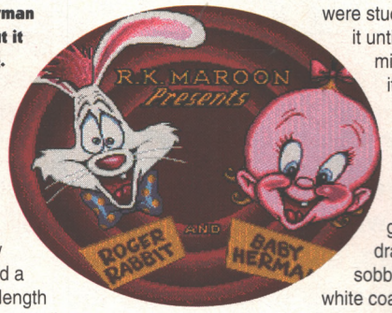
"The fun lies in the experience of the whole thing"

Nothing spectacular so far. But when I called the game a cartoon not one paragraph ago, I wasn't kidding. The speech and sound fx are pure Roger. Every cartoon sound effect you've ever heard accompanies every cartoon prank and mishap you've ever seen. Sound hasn't been used as well since the wonderful *Mega lo Mania* (why haven't you bought a copy yet?). And then there's the animation. Genuine cartoon graphics are the order of the day here. And it all combines so beautifully. Take, for instance, when Roger rummages around in the fridge. "Dum de dum", he says, before turning around with ice on his nose and ears. "Brrrrrr", he shrieks, before vigorously shaking the ice away. It's heart-warming stuff (if you'll forgive the pun).

so. As for the animation, it's all very well if you can put up with it pausing every half-a-dozen frames as the game accesses from the hard drive, which it does with monotonous regularity.

And I'd be a lot more impressed with the lengthy speech samples if they were in any remote way synchronised to the graphics. In Roger's long monologue at the start, for example, his lips never move – he lurches through a four-frame cycle of animation, one of which involves his mouth being open. See it to believe it, I don't think.

And what of the interesting puzzle-solving gameplay? Yeah, right. Bumble around aimlessly pulling and throwing things



Roger and Baby Herman happy together – but it doesn't last for long. The quest to save Herman begins...

until something ridiculous happens (cartoon logic, remember), and hey presto, you've solved a problem. Repeat at length until you run out of time, then go back to the start and trudge through the whole thing all over again at a tortuously-slow pace until you reach the bit you were stuck at. Plug away at it until the solution miraculously reveals itself, and go through this pantomime a few more times until you've either completed the game or been dragged away sobbing by the men in white coats. Gameplay? Don't make me laugh.

"Suffers from the same flaws as *Space Ace*"

This is a feeble excuse for a computer game, and if you buy it you deserve all you get. In fact, if you've already got a hard drive, it's probably worth selling the bloody thing, just so that you don't run the risk of ever having to play this.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

UPPERS Graphics, sound, cartoon humour, etc etc. Zzzzz.

DOWNERS Who is this aimed at exactly? It's too slow, tough and frustrating for kids, but your average hard drive owner doesn't use his expensive bit of hardware for crummy cartoon games. Despite what anyone might tell you, it suffers from exactly the same flaws as *Space Ace* et al.

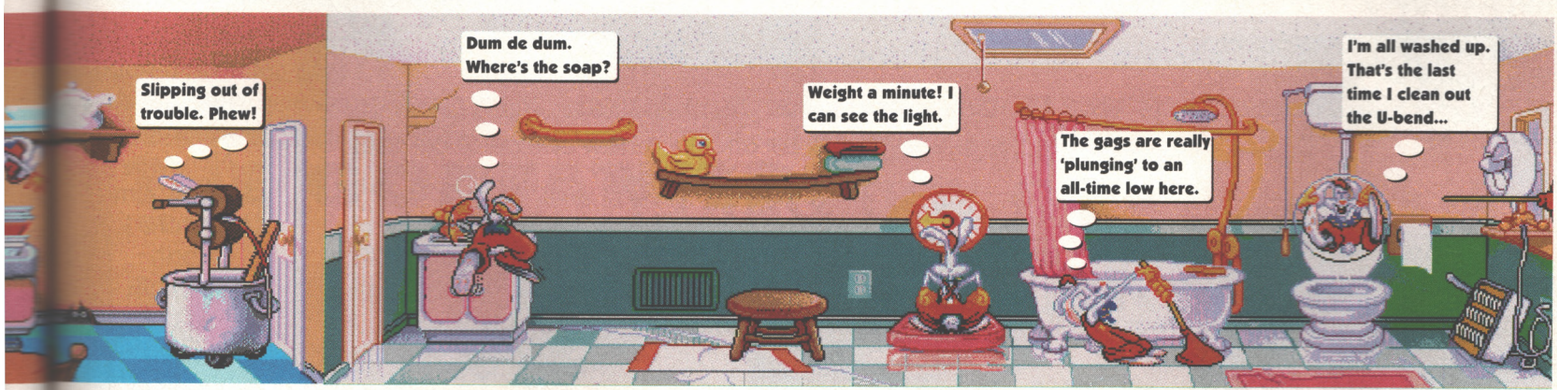
THE BOTTOM LINE

The 12 people who buy this game will play it for maybe a day until they've guessed their way to the end. In between, they'll get one laugh for every £1 they've just paid out. And good luck to them.

28 PERCENT

we present the case for and against Disney's new cartoon...

ING HAVOC



Gripes? Sure, there're quite lot. The gameplay is seriously limited. Complete a screen and you'll never really want to do it again (and there're only seven – yes seven! – of the bleedin' things).

OVERDRAWN ON THE HARD DRIVE

And then there's the disk accessing. There's a good minute's wait between each screen, but the worst comes during play. The graphics actually freeze for up to a second in places, while the hard drive chugs away (unless you've got the luxury of a whole two megs of memory), loading up the next sample or bit of animation. And when it's simply so Roger can say, "My, this is fun", it begins to grate quite seriously. Nobody is ever going to play through the whole thing more than once, and for any computer game this expensive that's a serious flaw. The gameplay is utterly basic, too, and not as interactive as it might first seem. The puzzles really are totally linear.

But there's something about this game which makes it wholly endearing anyway. When you think about it, the movie Who Framed Roger Rabbit was a vapid exercise in nice visuals with a few good one liners – and everybody loved that. The game is actually frighteningly close in concept. And besides – I've always wanted to dabble in watercolours.

● *MARK RAMSHAW*

Classic slapstick (left) in the great outdoors – doncha just love it? *(No, I bloody don't – Stuart).* Roger ruins another reel of film (above), much to the director's dismay.

UPPERS Sure it's a short, once only trip. But that doesn't mean it isn't fun. *Roger* is the best 'cartoon' game yet, and for that alone it's to be commended. It's much more interactive than Stuart would have you believe, too.

DOWNERS Its flaws will frustrate and disappoint. The game is painfully linear, and the hard disk accessing is a complete bummer. And forget the whole thing unless you've got 6Mb of hard drive space and at least 1.5Mb of RAM. Elitist or what?

THE BOTTOM LINE

A step (with the inevitable slip on a banana skin) in the right direction, but not admittedly that much of a game in its own right. The fun lies in the experience of the whole thing, though. And for that, I think it's worth...

68 PERCENT

THE COMPUTER GAMES OLYMPIAD 1992

What Is It? For the first time ever, Amiga game players are invited to take part in the first multi format games competition with the chances to win prizes and the coveted best games player award.

CAN YOU HACK IT?

What Else Can You Win? Awards will be given for style, gameplay and high scores. Prizes will be given both at regional and final levels and will include International Holidays including trips to Disneyworld, £10,000 Cash prizes, Computers, and Computer Games. Each entrant will also be given a certificate of attendance stating their position gained and the overall rating given by the adjudicators. Due to our unique system, every one in four entrants will be winners.

Where Is It? As much as possible we have tried to keep travel down to a minimum. On the right is a list of towns which will all have regional heats. Any other towns or areas that have a large registration count will also be included in the regional heats. The finals will be held in London at Wembly on the 25th September 1992.

ARE YOU A PLAYER?

How Do You Enter? Easy, just fill in your registration card below and send it with your registration fee to the Olympiad Committee at the address below before the final registration date May 1st. On receipt of your application all your details will be placed into our competition database and your entrance number and ticket will be despatched to you as well as a complimentary spectator ticket for a friend. On May 4th you will be sent confirmation of the date of your local regional heat and the venue.

Which Category Will You Be In? Categories will be by computer or console type, age, and game type.

What Games Do You Compete On? For the regional heats you choose your three favourite games and will compete on at least two. For the finals you will be offered a new choice of combat weapons.

DO YOU DARE?

How Will The Competition Work? For maximum enjoyment each round will include competing both against other competitors as well as the computer or console itself. All entrants are guaranteed at least 20 mins gameplay. Each region will produce 20-25 winners to go on to the finals.

Are There Any Limitations To Entrance? Yes. There will be a maximum of 10,000 competitors. The minimum age for entrants is 13.

Where Can I Get More Information? Call the registration Hot Line for more details.

VENUES

Aberdeen
Bath
Birmingham
Bournemouth
Brighton
Bristol
Cambridge
Cardiff
Dover
Edinburgh
Exeter
Glasgow
Gloucester
Guildford
Hereford
Hull
Leeds
Leicester
Lincoln
Liverpool
London N/S/E/W
Luton
Maidstone
Manchester
Middlesbrough
Newcastle
Northampton
Norwich
Nottingham
Oxford
Perth
Plymouth
Preston
Salisbury
Sheffield
Shrewbury
Southampton
Stoke-on-Trent
Taunton
York

THIS FORM CAN BE PHOTOCOPIED

THE OLYMPIAD COMMITTEE,
SPIKE ISLAND ~ 7, ESSENDON,
HERTS. AL9 6JF

OLYMPIAD 1992 REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION HOT LINE:
MON-FRI 8AM-6PM (0707) 665980

Computer or Console make: Amiga/Atari/Nintendo/Acorn/PC/Sega Model:_____

Title: Mr/Miss/Mrs_____

Name: _____

Address:_____

_____ Postcode: _____

Daytime Tel No:_____

Evening Tel No:_____

Age_____ Occupation: _____

Right or Left handed: _____

Top 3 Favoured Games	Hi-Score / Level
1 _____	_____
2 _____	_____
3 _____	_____

Preferred times to Play: Evenings/Weekends (Leave blank if either time is acceptable).

Please find enclosed my cheque/Postal Order for the sum of £10.00 made payable to Barclay Computer Services Ltd in respect of my registration fee with the Olympiad Committee for the 1992 Computer Games Olympiad.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

All trademarks recognised.

COMPLETE control

The only unusual thing about Complete Control this month is that it's more or less the same as last month's – the same ruthless blend of tips, solutions and cheats that's causing turmoil amongst games that think of themselves as pretty tough. There is no other tips page (not as far as this magazine's concerned, anyway), but if you're really stuck in a rut, turn immediately to The Last Resort, where you'll be able to meet other readers with similar problems and perhaps work something out between you.

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX
(MicroProse)

Proud new owners of this spiffing sim should give Cam Luong's cheat a go: On the last lap go into the pits, stick your brakes on, and escape the game. Then try accelerating the time. You should now – hurrah! –be ranked in first place.

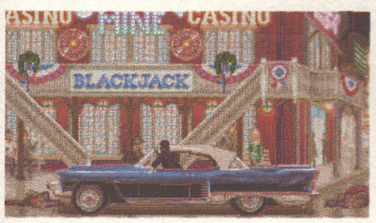
When it all gets *too* realistic... cheat!

RAILROAD TYCOON
(MicroProse)

Can't see any light at the end of the tunnel? Well don't jump the tracks! Follow Keith Raeburn of London's suggestion, and let off a bit of steam *(Er, now look here... Ed)* by pressing Shift and the '$' key together to top up your coffers.

Money, money money – it's no longer the end of the line for budding tycoons.

THE GODFATHER
(US Gold)



Pause the game and type PIZZA HUT (with the space) to activate the cheat mode. Thanks to, er, 'Mad Butch' of Bocholtz, The Netherlands for that one.

Hey, you touch my pizza, I smash your face, okay?

LEANDER
(Psygnosis)

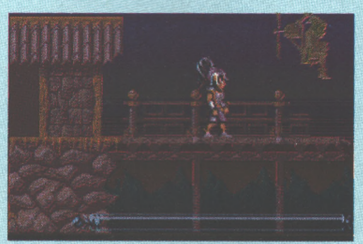
Enter the code as LTUS, exit the options and then enter the world code to gain infinite lives, suggests K Daire of Trowell.

S Warren of Dartford, on the other hand, suggests the following rather more 'above board' tactics:

– The best weapon to get is the longsword with one dagger. You lose the tempest blade and force blade when you die, but you keep the longsword if you jump up after dying and collect the dagger.

– Don't bother using the suicide weapon as it is a waste of a life and in some cases (eg reincarnated Spider Queen, world 3.5) it doesn't work anyway.

– A joystick with megablast-type autofire helps, but after using it you won't be able to fire again for a few seconds, leaving you vulnerable.

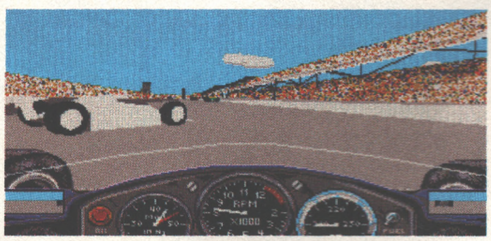


Cheat or use these playing tips to make headway in Psygnosis platformer.

– In the manual it says there are no random paths for enemies, but beware, as in later levels some baddies turn round once you've hit them and walk into you.

– Also, you can jump slightly further if you take a run up.

INDIANAPOLIS 500
(Electronic Arts)



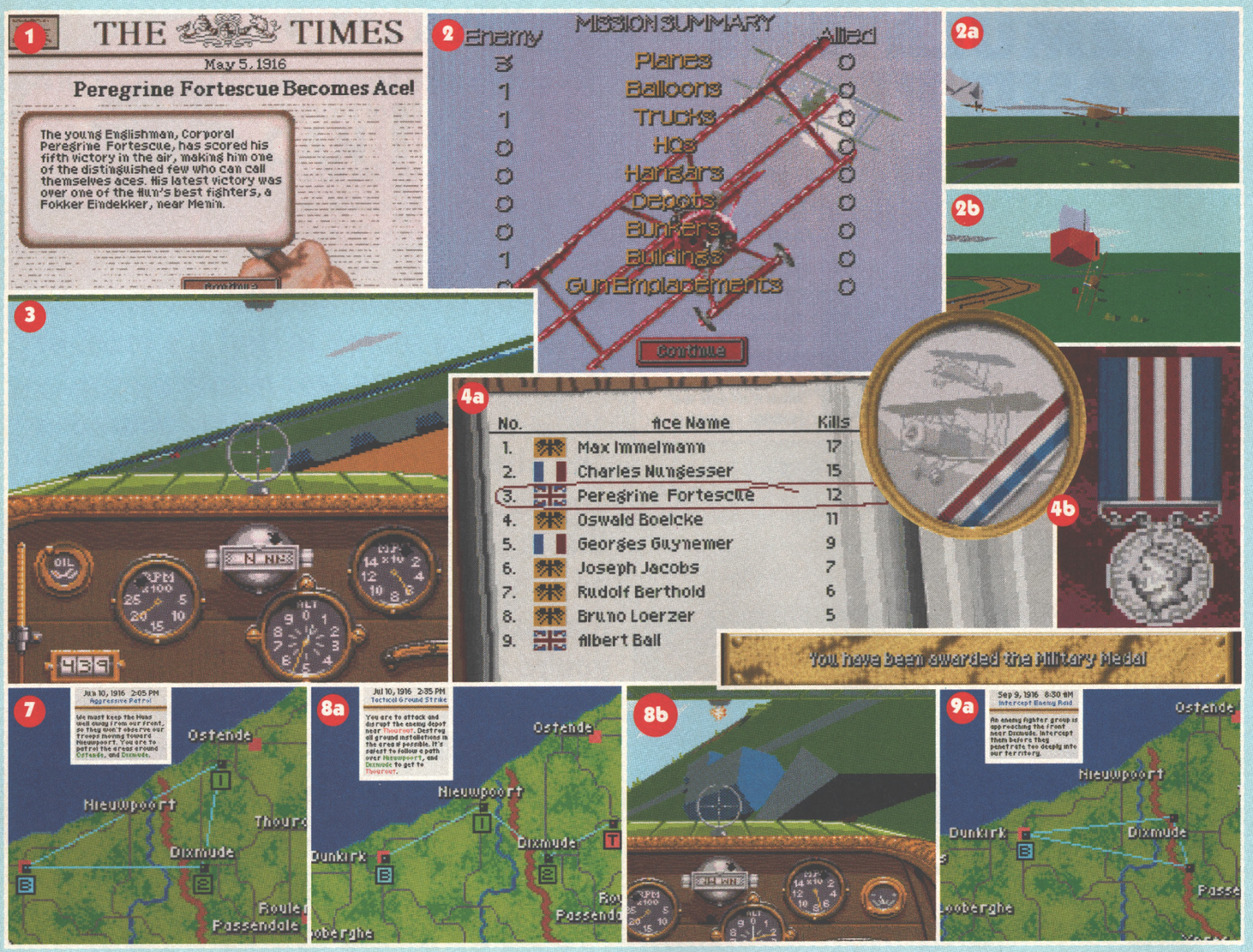
Building the perfect beast in *Indy 500*. A carefully constructed car can improve lap times, but driving skills are still a must.

If you want to be in with a chance of taking the lap record you're going to have to customise your car, and that's usually a pretty hit and miss affair. H Jordan of Reading claims to have come up with a combination that's given him a lap time of 38.25 seconds, shaving 0.15 off the record. Here's his secret:

Choose the Lola/Buick to start off with, and tweak the settings as follows:

Fuel – 5 gallons
Drag – front: 2 notches from top; rear: one notch from top
Tyres – right front and rear: hard; left front and rear: soft
Stagger – +0.20 inch
Tyre pressures – front right: 24 psi; front left: 28 psi; rear right: 24 psi; rear left: 25 psi
Shocks – two notches up from firm
Cambers – front right: –0.50; front left: +0.25; right rear: +0.25; left rear: +1.00
Gears – 1st gear: 9.30

This setup won't be much use after your lap is up, though. To adapt it for qualifying races, give it 10 gallons of fuel and set 1st gear to 8.13.



KNIGHTS O

Continuing on from last month's tales of WWI heroism, MicroProse and our very own

THE WORLD WAR ONE CAMPAIGN

1 When you play the full campaign game and set out to become Ace of Aces (like our Peregrine, above), you'll do well to bear in mind the following points:

2 There are two levels of scoring going on behind the scenes in *Knights Of The Sky*. The first and most obvious is the number of kills you have to your name. This is, quite simply, the number of enemy planes and balloons you've shot down during your career. The other scoring system remains more hidden to the player and it is this which governs your promotions throughout the war. Your rating goes up the more of the following enemy targets you destroy:

a) Planes
b) Balloons
c) Hangars
d) Depots
e) Bunkers
f) Gun emplacements
g) Trucks

Each mission you'll receive a boost to your promotion chances if you manage to return to your home base, so it could well be worth limping those few extra miles for additional glory.

3 As well as improving your rating, you can also delay or damage your prospects of promotion by cocking up in a number of ways. One is to destroy any of the following:

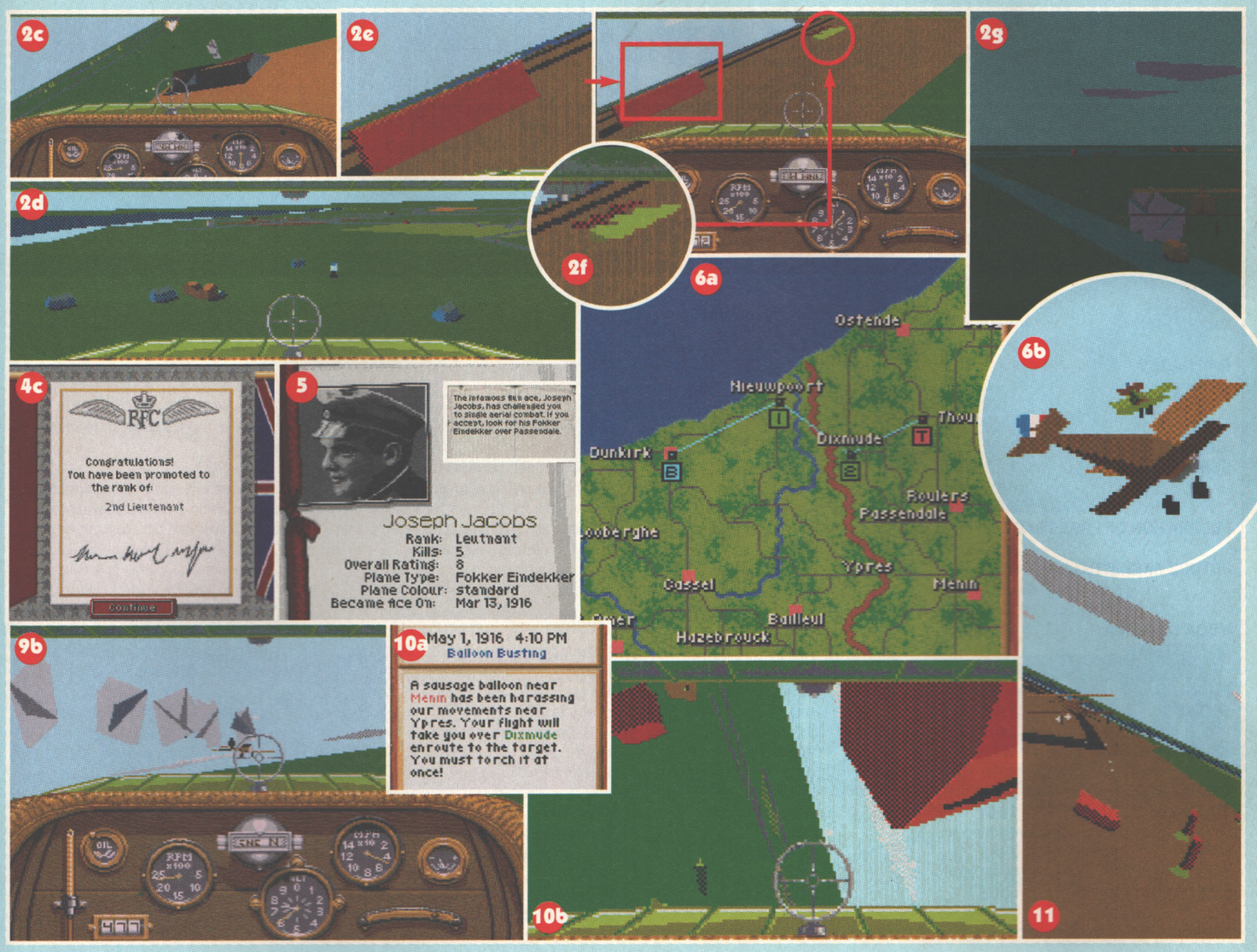
Allied planes, Allied balloons, Allied trucks, any Allied building, civilian enemy buildings, unarmed enemy parachutists

Another thing to bear in mind is the fact that every time you decline a mission you are allowing other pilots to leapfrog ahead of you in the promotion stakes. Think before saying no to a mission.

4 The main aim of a 'Knight Of The Sky' must be honour, promotion, and glory through victory. Your position and ranking (in relation to other allied flyers and enemy pilots alike) depends on how many enemy planes you've shot down – you can keep tabs on the current scoresheet by selecting the Ace Status Screen in the menu before each mission. Your first promotion to the rank of Second Lieutenant could well follow decoration for honour and bravery in the course of combat, something you'll only achieve through dogfights.

Your achievements are, quite neatly, recorded in the British newspapers of the time. In this series of screens you can see how our man Peregrine Fortescue became an 'Ace', receiving decoration for distinguished combat victory as well as promotion. After your third promotion you will reach the rank of Captain – an important turning point. From here on you will have sufficient rank to move your squadron's base around the map – something which can prove extremely useful in the tracking and hunting down of enemy aces.

5 Challenging enemy aces is an excellent way of achieving great glory and improving your chances of becoming Ace of Aces. Here our friend Peregrine attracts the attention of Joseph Jacobsen, one of the top German aces. Whatever you do, don't turn him down – winning a challenge is the quickest way to further your career.



F THE SKY

Matthew Squires conclude their tips for budding pilots...

MISSION SUCCESS

There are six mission types to challenge you in *Knights of the Sky*, but don't stick so rigidly to the task in hand that you can't take out the odd additional enemy target, be it a stray truck or gun emplacement.

6 Escort missions. To succeed in an escort mission the plane you are escorting must do its assigned task and return to base. You don't have to 'escort' the plane the whole way, but if you don't its chances of returning are much reduced. Don't worry too much if you momentarily lose your charge in the heat of a dogfight though – by consulting the map you should be able to catch up with it again. One word of warning though – these planes you've got to look after can be *very* eratic flyers, to the point of being dangerous. Don't say I didn't tell you..

7 Patrol missions. Here you must destroy a number of ground installations and planes in a given patrol area. The number goes up with the difficulty level. Once you've destroyed a sufficient number of ground installations and/or planes your mission is a success.

If you are given a desired route for a mission it is best not to venture too far from it, especially with patrol missions. If, in the heat of a dogfight, you find you've drifted off course, get back to your route as soon as you've dealt with the attack.

Use the shift key to bring up the map, giving you the chance to consult your mission route and get your bearings before switching back to the cockpit.

8 Ground strike missions. You are given a particular target and to register a success you must simply destroy that ground installation.

9 Intercept missions. Having reached your assigned intercept area you must destroy a number of enemy planes, the number being dependent on the skill level. Beware – the enemy become much more active when you enter the intercept area.

10 Balloon busting missions. Here your target will be a particular balloon installation – destroy it (not too hard) to register a success.

11 Ground support missions. When you reach the target trench area you have to destroy as many enemy ground installations as possible. Success again depends on skill.

That just about wraps up our tips, so go out there, fly wisely, and you too could become a *Knight Of The Sky*. ●

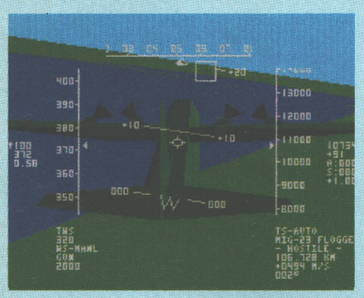
ACTION REPLAY POKES

This months batch of pokes WHICH REQUIRE THE PURCHASE OF DATEL'S ACTION REPLAY CARTRIDGE (available from most computer stores), were sent to us by Andrew and Stephen Gregory of Darlington, County Durham. Keep 'em coming.

GAME	ADDRESS TO POKE	AFFECTS
BOMBUZAL	1C137	Lives
CHASE HQ	2E7A8	Time
	29CF	Turbos
DAN DARE 3	14CAF	Lives
	24903	Lives
	24E42	Jets
	24030	Plasma rifle
ESCAPE FROM COLDITZ	7959	Tens of minutes
FERNANDEZ MUST DIE	84B	Lives
	84B	Lives
	84D	Missiles
FEDERATION OF FREE TRADERS		
	4E2C7	Missiles
FUTURE BASKETBALL	1E481	Player one score
	1E427	Player two score
	1E4D9	Time (seconds)
MEGA LO MANIA	17ED7	Men
PREHISTORIK	C08311	Energy
	C0830F	Lives
PUGGLES	1C17B	Lives
STRIDER	F9C5	Lives
	FF01	Health
STUN RUNNER	8DFD	Minutes
SWITCHBLADE II	261F	Lives
TEST DRIVE II	349D3	Lives
TURRICAN	7AB1	Lives
	7B1A	Mines
	7B1E	Smart blasts
UN SQUADRON	6857	Shields
VIDEO KID	3028E	Lives

BIRDS OF PREY

(Electronic Arts)



Now you needn't fly on a wing and a prayer – simply be a double-crossing traitor with our weird cheat.

This lengthy but intriguing cheat was donated by 'Blatant Pseudonym', whoever that may be. Anyway, on with the cheat.

At the beginning, when you make a new pilot, decide which side you want to fight on and make sure you start the pilot on the OPPOSITE side. It doesn't really matter which mission you choose, but Border/Sea Patrol is probably best as it means lots of enemy planes will probably come and bombard your ground stations.

Choose any plane you like, but the General Dynamics F-111 or Sukhoi Su24 Fencer are probably the best for it, and load it up with ground attack weapons. Taxi out of the hangar and proceed to destroy your own airbase using your cannon. Just taxi around blasting the air control tower, radar, aircraft shelter, hangar and anything else. Just don't get within half a mile of any of them or the explosion will destroy your plane, and don't start shooting until you've left the hangar or the doors'll close and seal you in. Then take off (bombing the runway on your way) and cruise around blowing up any friendly ground targets you can find.

You will have been labelled a traitor and assigned a new home base on the side you actually want to fight on, so head for this base when your fuel/ammo runs low. You can then proceed as normal, only your side will have a huge head start. The war can be shortened to a fifth of its normal length through this method. You can also land on an enemy runway during the mission and blow it up from the ground rather than zooming all over the parish trying to line up good aerial shots. But don't hole the runway before you try it! And beware of aircraft taking off while you try to land – this is not *F-19*!

CELTIC LEGENDS

(Ubi Soft)

1. Do not use the vampirisation spell on snakes, skeletons and angels, because the skeleton, for example, does not have any blood. Snakes are cold blooded and Angels do not have normal blood. If you do use a vampirisation spell on any of these characters you will lose life points.

2. On Cromlech terrain the enemy can cause serious damage as he has more magic power than you and the advantage of first strike. So it's best to attack the enemy here rather than getting yourself trapped on it. This is because Cromlech terrain is where you create military units and you have access to three more spells.

3. To take an enemy castle defended by magicians, send expendable soldiers after casting a contamination spell. This will weaken the magicians struck by the soldiers, and they will lose five life points every 30 seconds. Remember that you will have to wait a few minutes to let the viruses act.

4. Certain squares in tactical mode are surrounded by trees or other landscape elements which make them inaccessible except by teleporting yourself, or being teleported. If you place a character on one of those squares such that he cannot be attacked, don't stay too long or he will lose five life points each turn. To counter this you must keep enough magic points to get him back on another isolated square during the current tactical phase or he will be disintegrated.

5. There are several different magicians – a magician of level six or above can start storms by casting the incantation spell even if he's not on one of the squares around a pentacle. It can sometimes be useful to make this 'mistake' if, for instance, you're facing a more powerful enemy, to take advantage of the thunderstrokes falling on the enemies. Remember though, they'll strike you too!

6. A transformed character doesn't keep any viruses caught under his temporary form – he loses them by returning to his original form. He doesn't keep the experience gained in combat in his temporary form either. When he transforms, he has two movement points, whatever his race. So you can use this spell over and over again to surprise an enemy who thinks he is out of range.

7. Be careful of the vampirisation spell, as you not only absorb an enemy's life points through his blood, but any of his nasty viruses too!

8. The invisibility spell, lasting nine tactical turns, becomes a very good weapon of defence if you take care to cast the virulence spell on all the enemies present. This spell will give a virus to an enemy unit and they will lose life points – but take care not to give it to your own people too. You can then watch your enemies lose five life points every turn you pass, which makes for a total loss of 45 points each.

9. As an invisible character cannot be moved, remember that an enemy may be waiting for the kill as soon as you reappear. A good remedy is to place one of your strong characters on the same square, so that you reappear when he moves off the square. This keeps you invisible (and thus safe) for as long as the character is there.

10. Bear in mind that viruses work faster in some seasons, and can sometimes prevent a character recovering life points from wounded characters (or, at least, slow the process down). In winter, for example, the weather is harsher so it's harder to kill a unit with a virus.

WWF WRESTLEMANIA

(Ocean)

This devious little cheat was sent in by Tristan Leask of Northants.

***WWF* – the underhand waggling way.**

When you are about to go into a joystick waggling battle, follow these steps:
1. Pause the game.
2. Plug the mouse into the joystick port you are using.
3. Un-pause the game, and move the mouse rapidly from side to side. (This will enable you to waggle quicker than your opponent.)
4. When your character has won the move, pause the game and plug the joystick back in.
5. Repeat this whenever you get into a grapple.

WIN!

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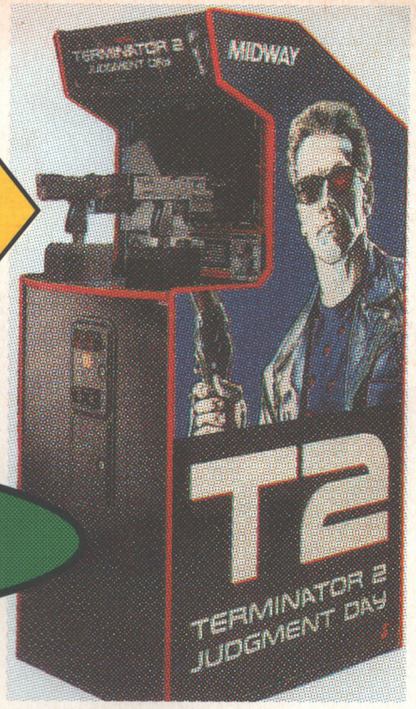

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FLUMMOXED?

Then you need...

THE LAST RESORT

with Jonathan Davies

Take your head out of that oven! Help is at hand from Jonathan Davies...

Is that mothership proving more troublesome than you'd anticipated? Have you just arrived at the Temple of Krall after days of journeying, only to find they won't let you in without a password? It's typical, isn't it? Well, that's where I come in (apparently). My appointed task is to take your problem and wrestle the solution from it with my bare hands, whatever the cost. Failing that, I'm placed in the humiliating position of having to pass your gaming dilemma over to the AMIGA POWER readership in the hope that they might know the answer (which they're bound to). Either way, you can't lose. Oh, and more fortunate readers might want to send in anything they think might help.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Q "After getting the monkey to follow me to the giant Monkey Head, I'm having trouble opening the gate to get inside it. I've got the monkey to follow me, and I think I know what to do after I'm in."
I Walker, Tamworth

A You'll kick yourself when you hear this: just pull the nose on the furthest away totem pole, and the monkey should take care of the rest.

GODS

Q "I keep getting killed when I've passed the World Two door. Can you give me a cheat, or some codes. And can you send them through the post, as AMIGA POWER is sometimes sold out."
Ian Bowyer, Middlesbrough

A Codes? They're different for every copy of *Gods*, so I can't help you there. As for the 'getting killed' problem, I can only advise brushing up your gaming skills. Perhaps if you ran a bit faster to the newsagent the rest would come naturally.

NIGHTBREED

Q "It's driving me mad, basically. Is there a cheat mode?"
Chris Smith, Cleveland

A There is. For infinite lives, type 'RISEN FROM THE DEAD'.

LOOSE ENDS

It's no good – I can't keep up the 'oracle' act any longer. Perhaps you might be able to help one of the following readers.

Q "I'm stuck on Level 3 of THE SIMPSONS. How do you get over the big wheel in the funhouse?"
John Somerton, Whyteleafe

Q "I've having trouble getting the holy grail in INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE. Every time I pick a a grail, or two together, I blow up and die. I've tried every combination but I still can't get back to Henry to save him."
Robert Wilson, Larkhall

Q "Is there a cheat for CAPTAIN PLANET?"
Alex McNeill, Hove

Q "How do you kill the bear on door 3 of ROBOCOD, the door with the '?'? I jumped on him five times and he's still not dead."
Michael Reilly, Van Nuys, Ca, USA

Q "VOODOO NIGHTMARE is giving me gip. I think I've completed the Eagle Temple, but a) I can't get out, and b) I'm unable to find the light (?) to enable me to enter the Temple of the Ape."
Adrian Bernascone, Shoreham-by-Sea

Q "I'm in the underwater section of the eastern maze in EXILE and I've found a small, round, red object inside a passage that's too narrow to let me through. There's a clam just outside it that I presumably need to 'suck' the object out, but it's only going to suck what it likes. But just what is that? Is it the 'friendly frogman' in the passages above, and if indeed it is, how do I get him to follow me to the clam?"
Chris Hartley, London

Q "Where do you go on FIRST SAMURAI on level two once you've collected all the buckets of water? I can't seem to break through to the right of the screen past the volcano thing."
Michael Reilly, Van Nuys, Ca, USA

Q "In CADAVER, how do you go about disposing of the Guardian at the end of level one?"
P Marshall, Sittingbourne

Q "I've reached the last level of MAGIC POCKETS and can't find a solution. There doesn't seem to be an exit, and the bubble keeps catching and killing me no matter what I do."
David Fleet

CASES CLOSED

See, I told you it was worth a try. Unfortunately, we've only actually got room for one case closed this month. More next time (promise).

KING'S QUEST V

Q **Shane Maunder of Hull** wasn't quite sure where to go next, having wandered into the desert and got zapped.

A "In the small tent is a staff, which you'll need to get into the temple. Be careful not to wake the bandit as you steal it, though. (Timing is essential.) In the temple you'll find a brass bottle which can be used to trap the witch (by giving it to her). Then you'll be able to go into her house and plunder it to your heart's content."
Donald Matthews, Leeds

As you can see, the Last Resort is shaping up to be the page to be reckoned with. Problems, posers and paradoxes are fleeing with their tails between their legs, and I seem to be innocently caught in the crossfire. But, glutton for punishment that I am, I'd like you to send me details of anything that's troubling you game-wise and I'll do my level best to find the answer, either personally or with the help of a suitably accommodating reader. If, on the other hand, you *are* that reader, and you can help out one of the above struggling readers, write in and earn yourself as much undying gratitude as you can handle. The address in either case is The Last Resort, AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Don't forget to mark your envelope "Questions" or "Answers" (or "Both", of course).

GVP

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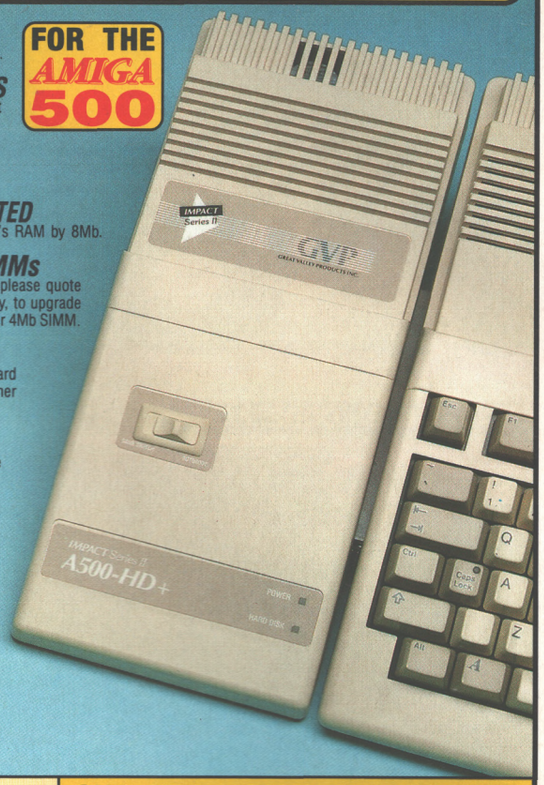
FOR THE AMIGA 500



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- **CUT-OFF SWITCH FOR GAMES** The GVP HD8+ features a unique switch to 'cut off' the hard disk for games that won't work with a hard disk. Most other drives require unbolting from the Amiga.
- **'MINI-SLOT' EXPANSION** This slot has been built-in to allow future expansions to be made without using risky 'Pass-through' techniques.
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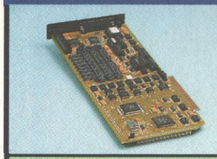

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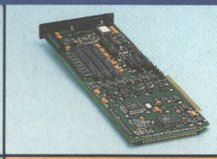

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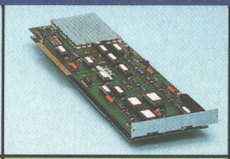

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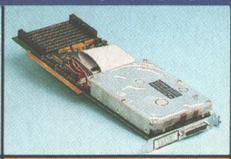

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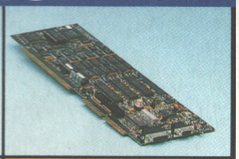

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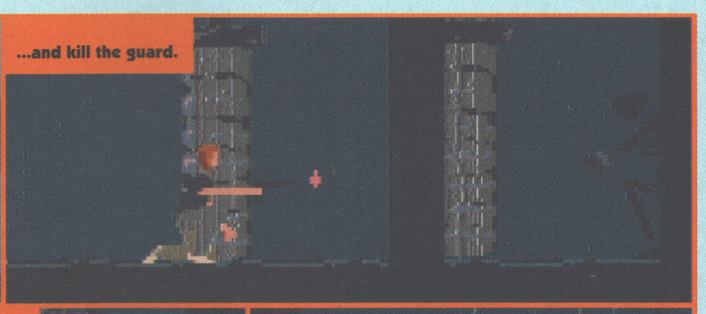
ANOTHER WORLD

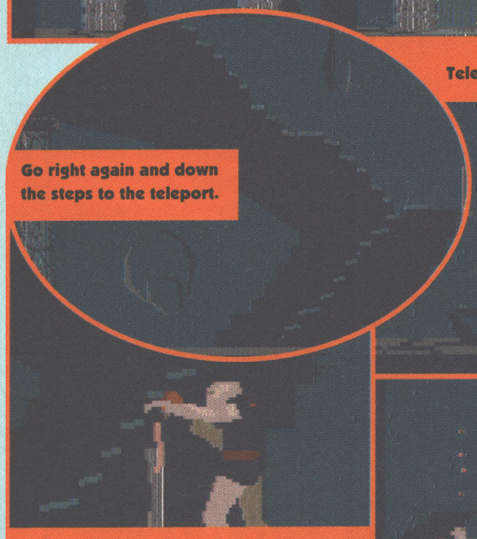
For all you space cadets who still haven't escaped from *Another World*, here's the final part of Stephen McAllister's solution to US Gold's classic. As you can see, it's not very big, just perfectly formed...

SECTION SEVEN CODE: KCIJ

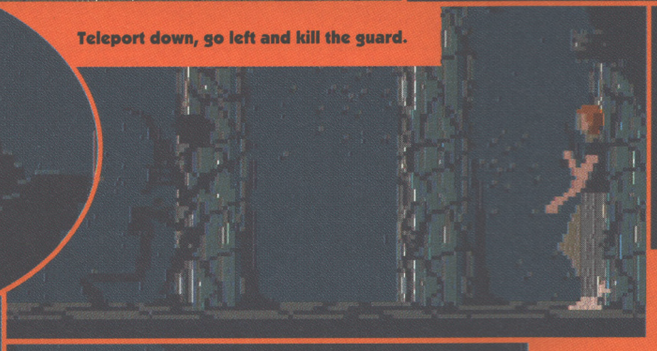
Go right, down the steps...



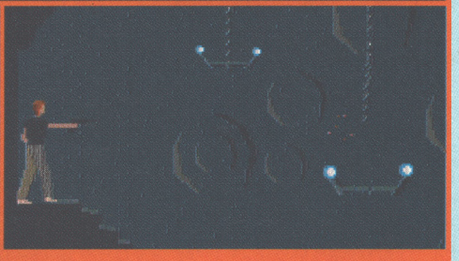
...and kill the guard.



Go right again and down the steps to the teleport.

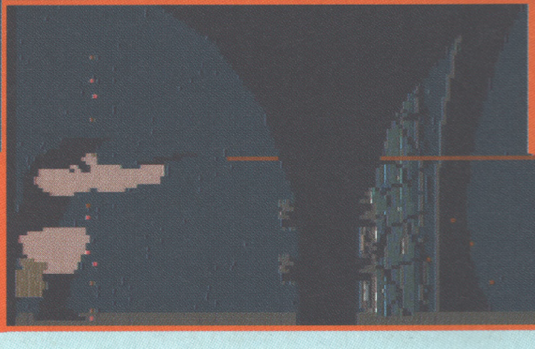


Teleport down, go left and kill the guard.



Go up the steps (those nearest the waterfall), turn round and shoot the chain holding up the lights. This allows your friend to escape above.

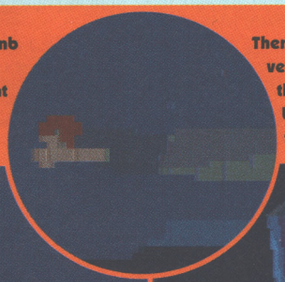
Go back to the screen with the teleport, and walk right, off the screen. When you do this a guard will appear and punch you. When he picks you up kick him, run and pick up your gun and shoot him. Go right again.



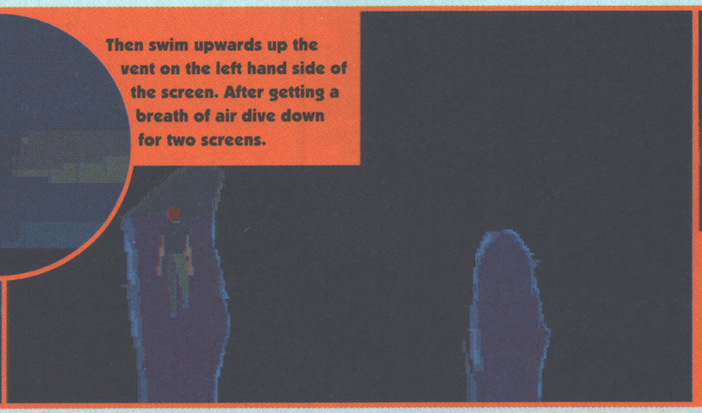
In this new screen, when you get a third of the way across (just after the first pillar) two guards appear, one in front and one behind you. The safest way to kill these guards is to create a shield when you reach the pillar so that when the guards are triggered, a shield protects your back while you kill the guard in front of you.

SECTION EIGHT CODE: ICAH

You should see a pool of water. Climb into the water and dive downwards until you see the door you blasted at the end of section 5. Quickly swim left until you reach the first chewer.



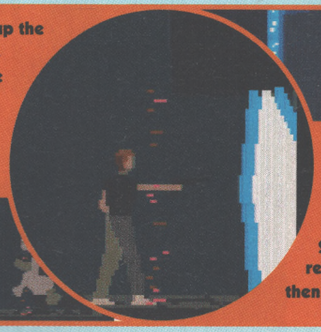
Then swim upwards up the vent on the left hand side of the screen. After getting a breath of air dive down for two screens.



Before you hit the spikes, swim right then up. Shoot the flashing line, then swim back up to the surface, collecting another breath in the process from the trapped air in the vent above the spikes.

SECTION NINE CODE: FIEI

Go back to the teleporter, teleport yourself up, go up the steps and go right. Do not walk through the door as the guard will kill you. Stand at the point just before the doors will open. Create a shield, then step forward so that the doors open then step back again. The guard will have thrown a grenade, which will rebound from the door and kill him.



Now blast open the door on the right of the screen and go through it. Use the teleport to get up to the gun recharge point and recharge your gun. Go down, then right.

When you enter this new screen kneel down. You will hear foot steps and if you look closely at the green balls you will see the reflection of a guard walking below. There is a point where the guard stops under the first green ball for a few seconds. Shoot the chain that holds up the first ball. You should then hear a smashing sound and a yell, indicating one dead guard.

SECTION TEN CODE: LALD

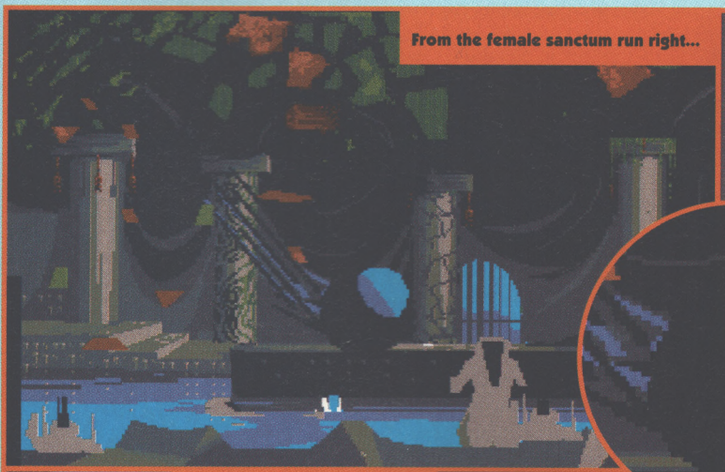
Fall down the shaft and blast the door at the right. Run right through all the doors until you reach the fourth screen. Run to the trap door, turn around, create a few shields. Someone will kick open the trap door and a hand will pull you up through the trap door.

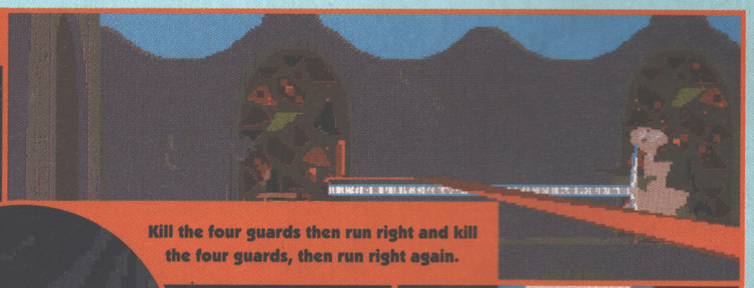
Wait for a few shots to be fired up through the trap door before you jump over it and follow your friend into the alien craft.

In the arena the directions for pressing the correct buttons are, from the start, press button, down , press button, left 2, down, press button, up 3, press button.

SECTION ELEVEN CODE: LFEK

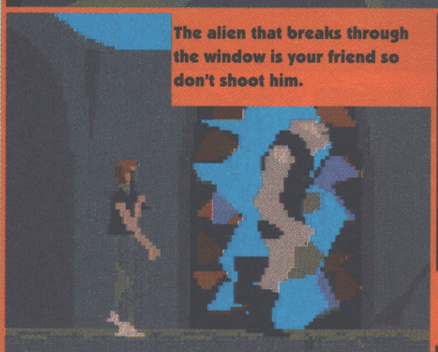
From the female sanctum run right...





Kill the four guards then run right and kill the four guards, then run right again.

The alien that breaks through the window is your friend so don't shoot him.



A shot will send you falling over the edge, but an alien hand reaches out and pulls you back to safety.

After getting beat up by the alien you can only crawl right to the levers.

The alien is not your friend, but one of the evil aliens. After saving you, he kicks you about for a bit.

Wait until the fight is finished, then time it so that when you pull the lever the alien is under the trap door in the centre of the screen. Then quickly pull another lever and crawl left underneath the open trapdoor. Don't worry if someone starts shooting at you, only the third volley of shots will kill you. When you crawl under the trap door you will be transported up and into the game's end sequence.

POPULOUS II

(Electronic Arts)

If your populace isn't quite as populous as you'd intended, here's a complete guide to populating the parts other players can't reach. In descending order of legitimacy...

***Populous II* – cheat modes a-go-go!**

Some general hints, first, from Darren Clay of Ecclesfield.

– Always sprog. This spreads your populous over the land. It's always better to have ten small houses than one big town.

– In the early levels, build your settlements on the lowest land level. The bad deity never uses his tidal wave on the early levels and it's less demanding on mana.

– When you want more people but you can't sprog, make smaller houses. They send out people faster than the big ones.

– Use papal magnets for directing your people to settle as well as making heroes.

– When creating a hero, always make sure it contains lots of people – a rubbish hero is a waste of mana.

– At the beginning of the game try putting basalt around your enemy's territory. This makes the land uninhabitable.

– Build castle walls around your territory to stop the enemy getting in.

– If the enemy has created a bridge across the water to your land, place baptismal fonts and tell your people to go to the papal magnet. This turns the opposing force into a strong hero.

– Volcanoes are worth investing in. They are hard to cap, they render the land completely useless and cause maximum destruction.

– When you create a hero, follow it and cast destructive effects of the same type as you go. The hero is immune to effects of its own type.

– A really crafty way of using whirlpools is to do the following: place baptismal fonts in the enemy's territory, and, when an enemy is turned and builds a house in their land, create a small lake and place a whirlpool. It's like a disease eating their land away from inside.

– Learn good patterns with the fungus. There are a few patterns that fire fungus off in eight directions.

If you'd rather cheat your way to success, type in this code from D Harrison of Chippenham to maximise all your divine attributes: ADKIUCKBZNZEFIWX

Although he admits to having lifted them off the Internet news system, where they'd been posted by a chap called John Rusterholz, we're still jolly grateful to Mike Hamilton of Salford for sending us all 1000 level codes. We're only going to print a hundred of them, mind.

0 DOEGAC	260 OMLOAF	520 OPQU	780 UBGHAD
10 UMHEAB	270 UGIMAK	530 TUUXAT	790 MMMNAC
20 NGAF	280 VEEGAD	540 DDLOAG	800 LDQUAB
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60 INUNAD	320 DONEAG	580 OMAGAC	840 OPITAF
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80 QUWIAB	340 NGUNAK	600 VENEAT	860 DDAGAD
90 UXII	350 GHOMAD	610 ABTTAG	870 AFAAAC
100 ADPEAT	360 ATJIAC	620 MEUBAF	880 PEUX
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170 ALDOAT	430 FEUGAC	690 ERDDAF	950 IIALAB
180 EGTIAG	440 PIWOAB	700 INCCAK	960 DOAC
190 JIERAF	450 LODO	710 OOUGAD	970 UMDDAG
200 OPEMAK	460 UBTIAT	720 QUWOAC	980 NGCCAF
210 TUADAD	470 MMERAG	730 UXDOAB	990 GHUGAK
220 DDLLAB	480 LDEMAF	740 ADIS	999 WOITAB
230 AFMN	490 ALAKAK	750 FENEAT	
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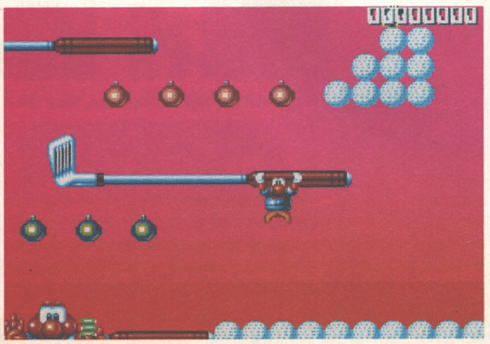
250 ISUXAG	510 JIMNAB	770 LOAKAF	

ROBOCOD

(Millennium)



There seems to be no end to this one's cheating possibilities if you root around for long enough, as Daniel Tilley of Oxford will vouch.

If you don't want to play ball, try some of these cheats.

On the first roof you come to, above a sign saying "Arctic Toys", is a row of five objects: a tap, a cake, an Earth, an apple and a hammer. Their initials are T, C, E, A and H. Pick them up in the order cake, hammer, Earth, apple, tap and you're invulnerable for the first three levels. Even better, on the sports equipment level, after the second spike pit, are some lips, a violin, an Earth, an ice-cream and a snowman – initials L, V, E, I and S. As anagram fans will already have ascertained, picking up the lips first, followed by the ice-cream, the violin, the Earth and the snowman will give you infinite lives.

As if that wasn't enough, Mark McJillen of Dublin, Ireland has discovered that typing LITTLE MERMAID (with space) after the game has started allows the following keys to be used:

F – wings
X – jump straight to exit
Return – invincibility (toggles)
P – plane
B – bath
C – car

The last three only work on some levels.

ROBIN HOOD

(Millennium)

Kevin Langstaff has been exploring the depths of Sherwood Forest, and has emerged with a complete playing guide between his teeth. And here it is (still a bit wet too...)

"Robin Hood, Robin Hood, riding through the glen. Robin Hood, Robin Hood, with his band of men..." *(I though I sacked this comedian last month – Ed)*

At the start, wait for the two guards to come out of the castle gate. When they walk past you, shoot an arrow and kill one of them. Then go into the first area of the castle. Stand next to the house near the drawbridge and shoot the guard that is patrolling there. Then hide in the house until the sheriff comes out to talk. Leave the house, go behind it and shoot the sheriff. The guards will lock themselves in the castle at this point, and you may be caught. If you are, wait until you're on your way to the gallows and then fight the guard for about two seconds before running away. Turn round, and shoot an arrow at the guard. No more guards will appear as they're all locked in the castle.

Then go up to the hermit (top left of the playing area), speak to him and he'll give you a crystal ball. You can use this to see where everyone is.

Having done this, go and wait on the road for the bald monk to return from the castle. When he comes he should be carrying two bags of money. Rob him and take his money. Then follow him until he sits down and then speak to him, asking him to join you. He'll refuse, but will give you a monk's clothes.

Now go and see Little John at the bottom right of the playing area. Walk onto the bridge and a fight will start. Wait and you'll talk, becoming friends. Go back to the road and wait for Maid Marion. Speak to her. Follow her, speaking to her again until you're given a ring. Then speak to her every time you see her after this.

Now go and find somebody without a green coat on and give them some money. If you see anyone with a green coat on, rob them and give the money to someone else.

Now go to the drawbridge and put the monk's clothes on. Go into the castle, line yourself up with a guard and click the mouse back on a guard. Shoot an arrow and put the clothes back on. Keep doing this until all the guards are dead and you're in the castle by yourself. Then sit back and watch the finale.

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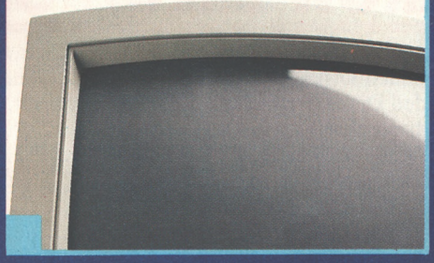

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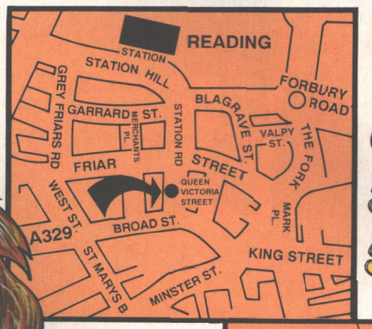

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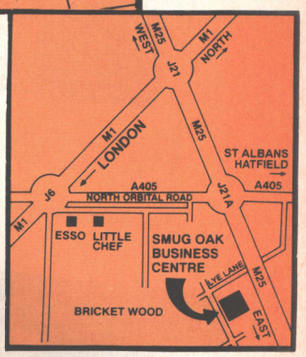

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It's a question we've all asked ourselves – why on

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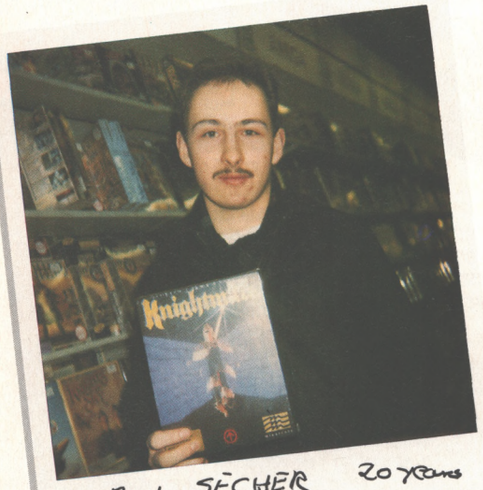
Do you recognise this man? It's AMIGA POWER's Matt Squires, and it's just possible you may have bumped into him games shopping on Oxford Street one cold Monday earlier this year. That day he was a man with a mission – to find out just what new releases were tempting you, the Great British games-buying public, into parting with your hard-earned cash, and, more importantly, why.

There are no conclusions to this, nothing big to be learned. The games that were being bought weren't, in the main, surprising, but perhaps some of the reasons for purchasing them were. Let's head on over to the shop floor...

DEREK POWELL



POUL SECHER 20 YEARS
P. Secher DENMARK

Age: 22
From: Luton
Bought: First Samurai (Vivid Image)

"I'm looking for something with a bit of action, and that's why I've chosen this one. It's packed with good graphics, it's fast moving, and there's never a dull moment. I've already had a little go on it, but to be honest I know it's the sort of thing I'll like anyway. I'm mainly into fighting games – I can't stand simulators or RPGs, for instance. If I was to go down the fair or the arcade *First Samurai* is the type of game I would play.

"It's a big game too, so there'll always be new levels to explore – it's never a case of 'been there, done it before and now I've got to get a new game'. With this one you can just keep playing it – and besides, I'd read a great review of it before I came out to buy it. I tend to go by what the magazines say a lot actually. By reading the reviews you find out about the different challenges and levels a specific game has. Above all you want to find something that you haven't played before. If a game has a good write-up, then it's the sort of thing I'll go for."

PAUL KIME AGE 32
HERNE HILL
LONDON

POUL SECHER

Age: 20
From: Copenhagen, Denmark
Bought: Knightmare (Mindscape)

"I went for this because it seems to contain all the things that a good computer role playing game should. It has advanced character generation and nice graphics. The monsters look good too and it all seems new and interesting – it's got everything an RPG should have as far as I can see.

"I only play role playing games actually – I started out with *The Bards Tale* on the Commodore 64 years back – because they always seem to give you a new challenge. Every time you solve a problem you get a new one which is totally different to the ones you've already solved. Action games and flight sims are all too samey for me. I don't like the look of any of the racing sims either. In fact the only other game here to catch my interest is *Celtic Legends*, but what's put me off is the way you move around the landscape. It seems to be more like an action game or arcade adventure than a real role playing game."

DEREK POWELL 22.
LUTON.

PAUL KIME

Age: 32
From: Herne Hill, London.
Bought: Red Baron (Sierra)

"I've chosen to buy *Red Baron* mainly because I liked the sound of it when it was reviewed on the PC. I picked it because it's a flight sim – I'm not into shoot-'em-ups at all, although I do like strategy games. I have more strategy games than flight sims actually, and recently I've spent more time on *Railroad Tycoon* than anything.

"The things that appeal to me about a game are depth, decent artificial intelligence and, more importantly, value for money at the end of the day – it's pointless buying an adventure or strategy game that you can finish in four days, which is something I've come across now and then. Actually, one thing I've learned to do is take magazine reviews with a pinch of salt. A lot of them I find childish, to be honest – they don't give me enough information and that doesn't make me want to go out and buy the game."

Earth did I buy that game? Often there's no entirely convincing reason at all...

OUGHT WHAT..?

DAVID NATOFF

Age: 26
From: West London
Bought: Oh No! More Lemmings (Psygnosis)

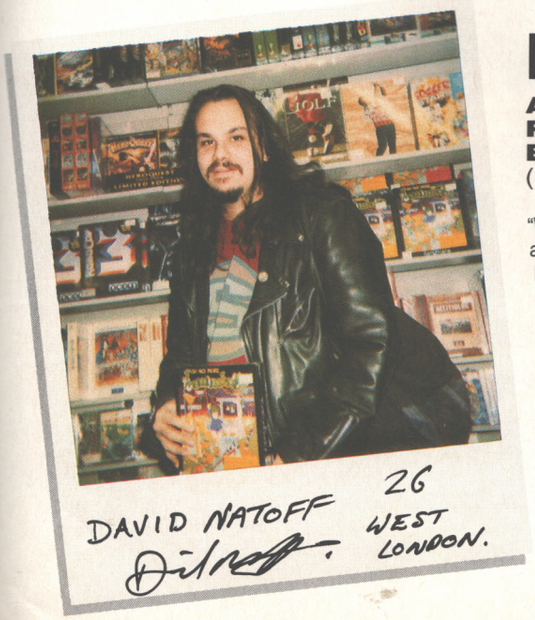
"I was thinking about buying *Oh No! More Lemmings*, because *Lemmings* was such a good game and kept me interested for so long. To be honest, though, I go for all sorts of games – I like platform games, I've been playing a lot of shoot-'em-ups recently, and things like *Rick Dangerous*, *The Killing Game Show* and *Speedball 2*. What an amazing game that last one is – it's certainly one of my favourites. In fact, the only sort of games I don't like are role playing games. They bore me. Other people might think they're the bee's knees, but not me.

"Something else I'm looking forward to is *Agony* from Psygnosis, the same label as *Lemmings*. I've heard quite a lot about it – it looks very Japanese."

SYED QADRI

Age: 22
From: Ilford, Essex.
Bought: Wolfchild (Core Design)

"This is the game I'm going for because I've read all the reviews about it and they've all been really good. Nearly all the games magazines have said that it's a good one to buy, even though it's only five levels long. That doesn't mean I'm just into platform games though – I'll go for anything basically. I play shoot'-em-ups mainly, but sports games as well. Over the last few months I've been playing a lot of *Jimmy White's Snooker*, and Gremlin's *Lotus Turbo Challenge 2*. Both of them are fast, realistic and easy to play. I love the bit in *Jimmy White's Snooker* where, when you strike the cue ball, it actually shows that ball going towards the one you want to hit. I think I look at the realism of the actual game first in every case."

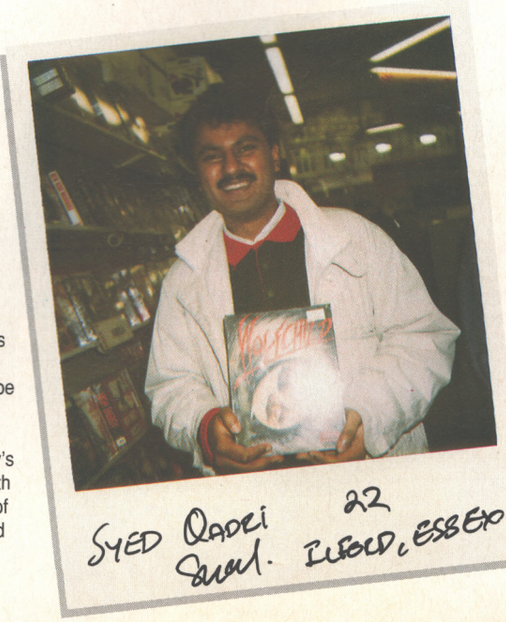


ROBERT HALLEN

Age: 17
From: Manchester
Bought: Another World (Delphine)

"Well, I want something that will really grab my attention really – mostly adventure games that will keep me occupied for longer than just a couple of days. That's why I've gone for *Another World*. It's from Delphine and the games that I've had from them are brilliant – they last a long time too. The graphics are the first thing to appeal to me – it looks brilliant, so smooth.

"When you've paid £30 for a game you need to be able to play it more than a couple of times, then finish it and put it away. If you've got a game that lasts a long time then at least you get your money's worth out of it. I always like getting magazines with demos on the disk because it gives you an idea of the actual game playability before you go out and buy it. That's why I got *Mega lo Mania*, actually."



ROGER GREENHOUGH

Age: 21
From: Colindale
Bought: Another World (Delphine)

"I'm going to buy *Another World* because I read a review of it and it looks interesting and the graphics look different. I find with some games that the animation might look okay but when you actually play it you find that the character doesn't respond all that well. With *Another World* the games reviewers just went on and on about it, so I figured it must be alright. Everyone went on and on about *Another World* like it was the second coming of the Messiah in game form, so I've got high hopes for it.

"Other things I've been playing recently include *Alien Breed*, which I think is excellent. I get so into it, especially on level two when the countdown starts. Also *Leander* which is good, and *Lemmings*. Little other than that really, as I've only had the machine a week and I'm still learning. Anything you'd recommend?"

ANDREW LEE
23.
EASTLONDON

ANDREW LEE

Age: 23
From: East London
Bought: Populous 2 (Electronic Arts)

"I've just got my Amiga, a 500 Plus. At the moment the biggest problem is actually finding games that work on it. I'm interested in all games really, but so far because of the compatibility problem I'm a bit stumped. I do like arcade adventures, though – I've been playing *First Samurai* more than anything else recently, because it's compatible but also because it's just about the best around. I like the presentation of it – the graphics are good and the playability too. If *Speedball 2* had been compatible I would have bought that too, because it appears to be a really good arcade sports simulation.

"Today I've bought *Populous 2* because, though it's not an action game, the reviews have said that it's good and the screenshots in the magazines seem to suggest that too. Let's just hope I like it when I get home, eh?"

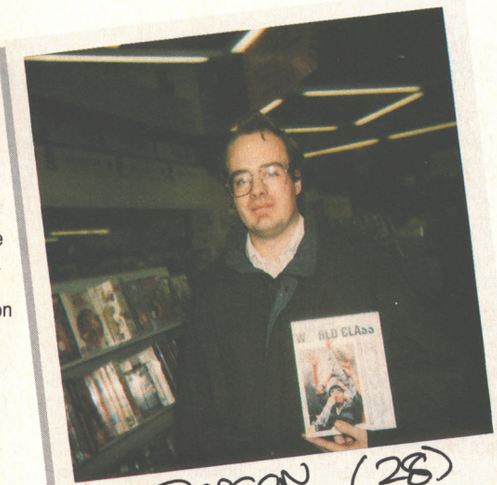
ROGER GREENHOUGH
Age 21. Colindale

PAUL ROBSON

Age: 28
From: South Kensington
Bought: World Class Rugby (Audiogenic)

"I'm going to try the Audiogenic *Rugby*. I actually tried Domark's *Rugby The World Cup* already and I didn't like it. A lot of the reviews I read said it was quite good and I think they must have played it as a two player game. If you play it on your own I find the tactics of the opposition are very limited. All the reviews say that it takes some time to get a hold of what you have to do in Audiogenic's *World Class Rugby*, and that makes me suspect it might have a bit more depth to it.

"I'm actually a computer programmer, and the Domark game seemed a little sloppily put together to me too. I looked at the way Domark had done it and you can actually see little faults here and there. The forwards shouldn't be able to run at the same speed as the backs, that sort of thing. It's like a lot of games that really haven't been tested properly. I beat the game after a week, not even playing it very intensely."

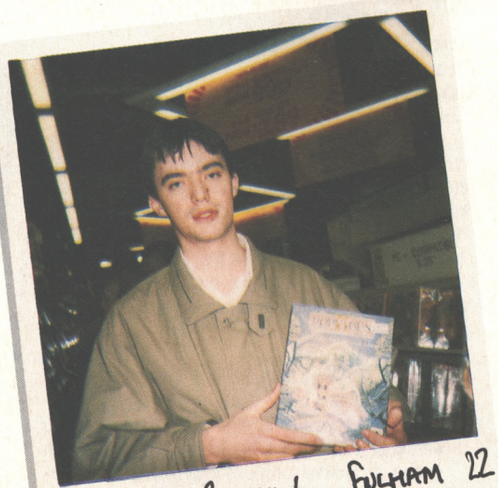


PAUL ROBSON (28)
SOUTH KENSINGTON.

SEAN RANKIN

Age: 22
From: Fulham
Bought: Populous 2 (Electronic Arts)

"I usually buy strategy games or simulations. I prefer them to shoot-'em-ups because they exercise your brain cells slightly more, and I've always liked to run things myself. I like the feeling of control! *Populous 2* appeals to me because, the way I play it, no two games would be the same and within the realms of the game you can make it as easy or as complex as you want. With this game you can be as ruthless or as kind as you feel like being, which seems great to me. Oh yes, and the graphics all look good too. The ones in this new *Populous* game are much better than the old one, especially the special effects, though to be honest I'd be quite happy with a simple text game as long as it was strategy-based."



SEAN RANKIN FULHAM 22

THAT'S ALL FOLKS!
Thanks to all of you who took the time out to talk to us, and our heartfelt apologies to those we didn't manage to fit into the magazine. These interviews were conducted at the Virgin Games Centre in Oxford Street, London, so special thanks to them and their helpful staff, in particular Barry Katz and Martin Alltines. Cheers guys.

ON A FINAL NOTE:
If any of the buyers featured here would like to write in, we'd be very intrigued to find out how they got on with their respective purchases. How did you find the Amiga *Red Baron* in the end, Paul? And did *Another World* really deliver the long life you were after, Robert? There'll be software prizes for any of you who write in and tell us...

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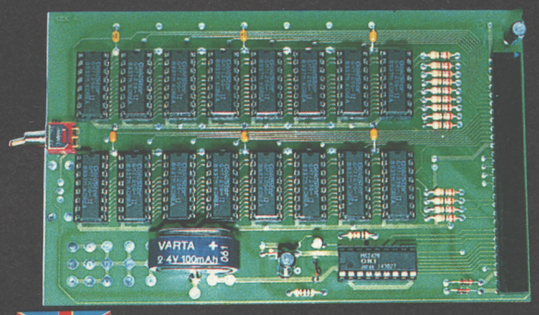

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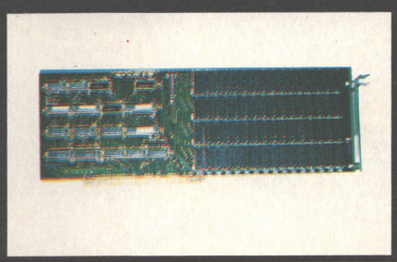

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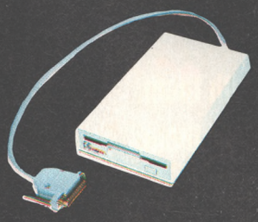

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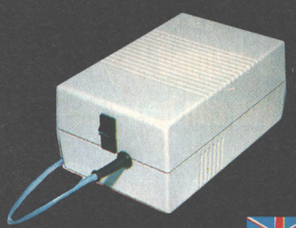

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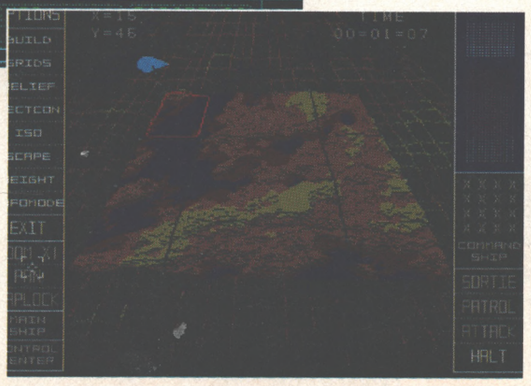
YEAR OF THE owl

YEAR OF THE OWL

Perhaps most of all, Psygnosis is the company that's defined how we think about 16-bit games. It's also the one most of us know the least about – almost reclusive in attitude, they've traditionally preferred to let their games do the talking. Until now. Over the next eight pages, Mark Ramshaw becomes the first journalist in years to go behind the scenes at the company, talk to the top people, and report back on developments that will shape the future of computer games...

AIR SUPPORT

Programmer: Alerich Binnie
ETA: June



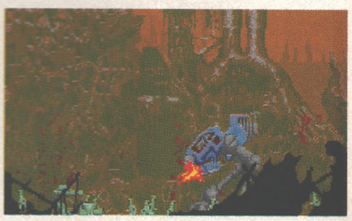
Above: The in-the-vehicle 3D display of *Air Support* (the finished game will hopefully look a good deal less messy than the screens you see here!) Right: The game's central contoured strategy map in all its glory.

Anybody remember *Koronis Rift* – the forgotten C64 classic? Well, *Air Support* looks kind of vaguely like that, with rolling hills and a first-person perspective that bounces up and down in sympathy with the undulating terrain. The game itself is actually a strategy-based affair, a contour map forming the core of the war plan. From this, screen strategies are planned – and the 3D driving and flying bits accessed – in an attempt to overthrow the enemy 'force'.

As the screen shots show, *Air Support* actually uses wireframe 3D rather than solid graphics, a seemingly retrograde step, but there are two notable advantages to this. The first is simply one of speed. It's the other that's the doozy though – in *Air Support*, a 'real' 3D mode can be activated. That's right, it's time to don 3D glasses and play a game that actually reaches right out of the screen! The last time we remember anyone doing this sort of thing was back in '86 or '87 with Paradox/Elite's *Wanderer* (programmed by Walking Circles, creators of *Dark Star* – see the *Aqua Ventura* preview – fact fans). Of course this sort of thing is basically just a gimmick, if a neat one, but we've heard enough nice things about the game to believe it'll work on every other level too.

WALKER

Programmers: DMA Design
ETA: Autumn



Looking closer to the present, DMA's *Walker* (also briefly previewed in issue five) is a lush shoot-'em-up in best Psygnosis style. The original design was heavily inspired by the *R-Type* games, but this final version has settled for a more original walking/shooting design. The player controls a two-legged robotic walker (reminiscent of the small walkers in The Empire Strikes Back) which strides around a decayed future landscape blasting all and sundry. *Walker* has already been in development for a number of months, but DMA are determined to refine the gameplay, rather than simply churn out another run-of-the-mill blaster. Get ready, then, for DMA's return to mindless violence – certainly a good refreshing change from those damn cute *Lemmings*! →

YEAR OF THE owl

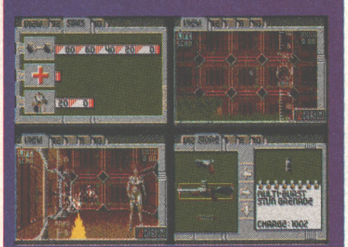
BIKE GP

Programmers: Interactivision
ETA: Summer

Not content with taking the vector 3D approach to the world of motorbikes (see *Red Zone* across the page) alone, Psygnosis are attempting a console-style game too. Out go realism and complex graphics – what *Bike GP* offers instead is ultra-fast *Pole Position* action and breakneck-paced sprite 3D. Using graphics even simpler than *Lotus II* and Core's fortchoming Jaguar licence, *Bike GP* is likely to appeal to the same crowd who go for the likes of *Vroom* – the kind who appreciate a good driving feel mixed with hell-for-leather arcade speed. Looking more like an Atari 800XL game (remember them?) than anything, *Bike GP* has a definite Identity all of its own – partially down to the speed and partially down to well-rounded, 'airbrush'-style graphics (kind of like Novagen's *Encounter*). Unfortunately, we weren't able to get you a shot of the ultra-speedy track action, but trust us when we tell you that it looks pretty damn groovy. On the surface a disappointingly straightforward release from Psygnosis, but if it's really as fast and furious as it promises, who the hell cares?

HIRED GUNS

Programmer: DMA Design
ETA: Christmas



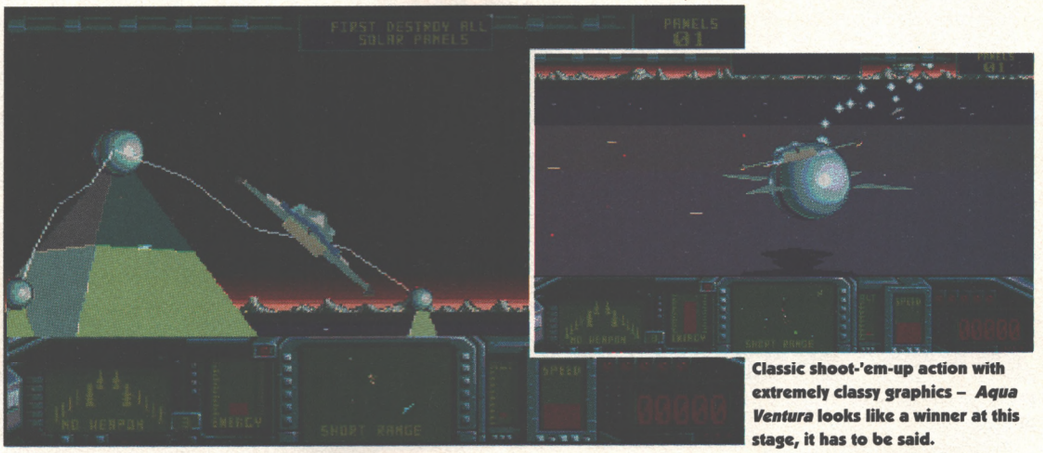
If this one looks a little familiar, it's because we gave you a sneak preview back in issue five in our If We'd Known Then... feature on DMA. The game is still quite a way from completion, but the basic concept is pretty much the same as before: the screen display is split into four different first-person views of the world. This display system allows up to four players to move independently through the game world, getting violent with →

AQUA VENTURA

Programmer: Bill Pullen
ETA: May

Gorgeous 'Ridley Scott'-style graphics ahoy! The intro sequence to *Aqua Ventura*.

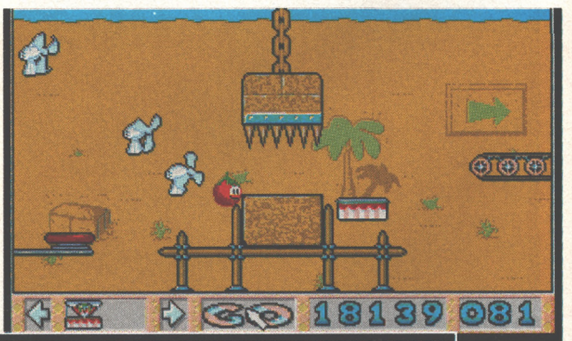
Four years in the making (yes, you read that right!), *Aqua Ventura* has gone through the hands of several programmers and had its design twisted in all sorts of directions. The result? A fast-burn adrenalin rush of a shoot-'em-up, with absolutely no pretensions to depth. Reference points for *Aqua* lie somewhere between *Buck Rogers*, *Defender* and *Starglider*, with just a touch of the outdoor sequence of Psygnosis' *Infestation* for good measure. Using an simple arcade-style 3D view, a mixture of solid vector graphics and metallic sprites are drawn together with unique visual results. Defiantly old-fashioned, *Aqua Ventura* is like the Psygnosis titles of three or four years back – hell, there's even a space tunnel sequence straight out of the Spectrum classic *Dark Star*! The message is firmly that frivolous is fun, but that's no reason to ignore the graphics. (Just where 'aqua' bit will come into the gameplay hasn't actually been sorted as yet, but at the moment the idea is thus: you've got to locate and destroy a solar dish, then knock out the main generator and warp – through a space tunnel – to the next level.) Of course there's plenty of other bits'n'pieces to complicate things just a touch, but not quite enough to make brains a prerequisite to playing. Perfect.



Classic shoot-'em-up action with extremely classy graphics – *Aqua Ventura* looks like a winner at this stage, it has to be said.

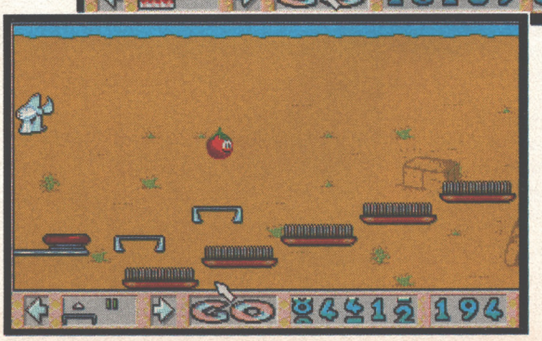
TOMATOES

Programmer: Bill Pullen
ETA: Pre-Christmas



Rumours that this game will be so expensive that Amiga owners will have to buy it on HP are entirely unfounded! What we have here from the Psygnosis boys is the pure(e) truth, and nothing but. The concept is beautifully simple – imagine a game where each level has an exit at the right hand side of the play area, and a cute and squeezable tomato ready to bounce across from the left. Easy, peasy, tomato squeezy so far, and it would be if not for the small matter of platforms, spikes and other obstacles getting in the way. This is where an array of handy kitchen items come in. Like – hey! – why not use a fan to propel the tomato through the air, over the nasty spike, and place a trampoline (well, some kitchens have 'em) just beyond that, thus propelling our fruity little freedom-fighter to safety? And why not have the player place all the stuff around the screen *before* the tomato makes his leap for the exit?

The graphics you see here will be drastically changed before the Xmas release (the main tomato will be that bit more saucy, and the backgrounds that tad fruitier), which may just be enough to let *Tomatoes* (ahem) ketchup with that other, vaguely similar, Psygnosis hit. You know the one...



Above: Only careful fan placing will get you past this spiked crusher.

Left: We're about to burst yet again...

F-14/18

Programmer: Ed Scio
ETA: Autumn

Going in for a Top Gun-style flyby – the cockpit views in *F-14/18* are pretty cool, but the panoramic external views are what *really* make it look dynamic.

The 3D supremo behind *Armour-Geddon* gets flighty with what could become the successor to EA's *F-18*. Combining dizzyingly fast 3D with plenty of close-quarters aerial combat, *F-14/18* looks like it'll be aimed more at the blasting fraternity than the propeller heads who went for the likes of *Birds Of Prey*. Plenty of dynamic external camera views are available for perfecting those Top Gun sequences while blasting the bandits at whatever-'o-clock too. The graphics you see here are actually a bit simpler than the ones due to appear in the final version – more polygons, and more realistic 3D objects will be the order of the day. But will it beat the fabby *F-15 II*? Could just be...

AGONY

Programmer: Yves Grolet & Franck Sauar
ETA: March

Now this *is* typically Psygnosis, right down to the use of their company mascot as the main character! A parallax scrolling shoot-'em-up featuring some of the most beautiful graphics ever, *Agony* takes the *Nemesis/R-Type* concept about as far as it can go (visually, anyway). Putting the player in control of the Psygnosis owl, it's simply a matter of surviving five demon-infested worlds. There're the essential power-ups and end-of-level guardians in there, of course, but the graphics really grab the attention – seas roll and crash, charred trees smoulder, and nasties fly around the place like nobody's business. Simple it may be, but *Agony* pushes the Amiga's graphics capabilities further than any normal blaster.

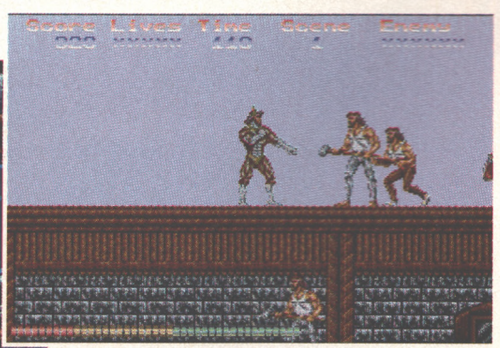
Your owl (bottom left of these screens) gets fried by one of the game's beautiful but deadly demon things.

HERO

Programmers: Kage
ETA: Autumn

Everybody needs a hero, so it makes perfect sense for somebody to come up with a multi-level beat-'em-up where the player actually gets to *invent* new heroes as the game progresses. And, bizarrely enough, that's just what Kage have done. At the moment the game consists of the basic martial arts gameplay and a genetic lab where super-heroes are created. The idea, though, is that during super-heroic missions elements of Super Hero DNA can be recovered. Then, once back in the lab, these extra elements can be thrown into the genetic melting pot to create a new type of hero. It sounds promising – there's the challenge of trying to create a character who can fly, for instance – and though nobody's managed to successfully recreate that super hero 'feel' in a computer game yet, this could be the one to do it. Fingers crossed, eh?

Three baddies beat our hero into submission. Now, if only he could fly...



Super hero generation screen (left) and some standard fighting (above) – this could just turn out to be the most enjoyable beat-'em-up ever.

YEAR OF THE owl

each other, as well as getting involved in a moderate amount of role-playing. The four player mode coupled with the use of a sci-fi scenario is enough to distance *Hired Guns* from the current spate of pure role-playing games (if anything, it seems to influenced by the arcade classic *Xybots*), and anyway, it's from DMA, so you can expect something pretty special.

RED ZONE

Programmers: Danny Gallagher
ETA: May

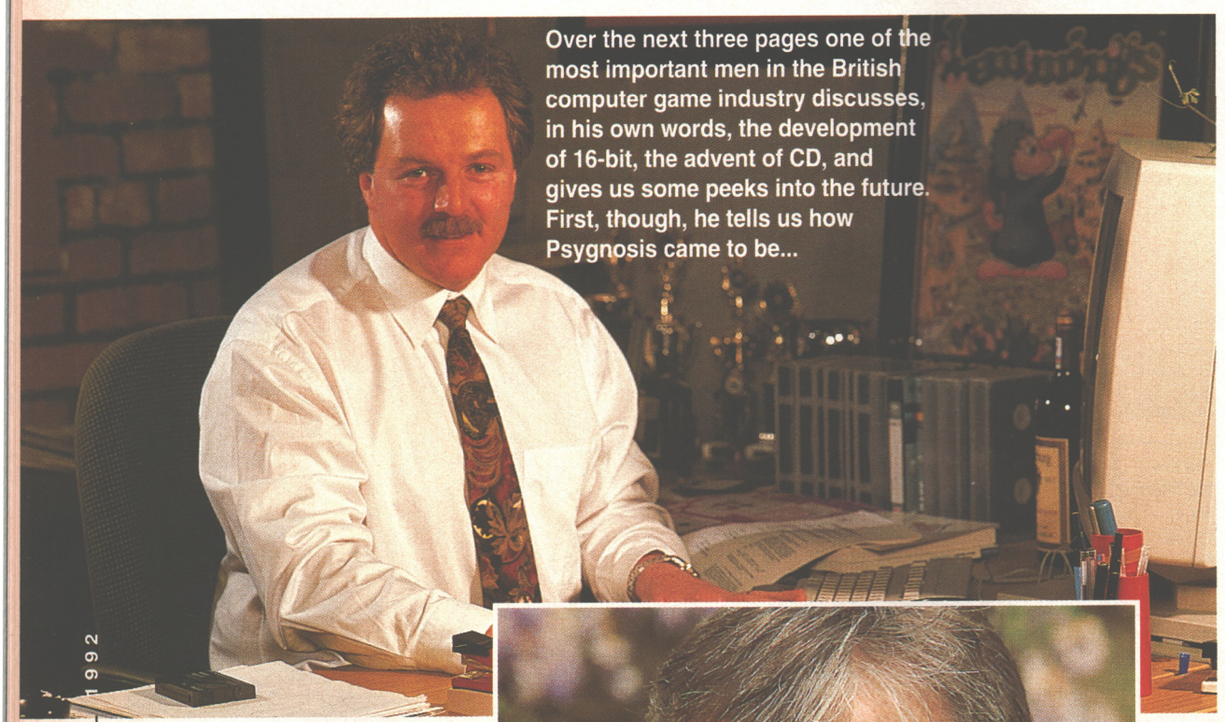
Amiga owners have always been a bit starved of decent motorbike games – the number of decent ones can be counted on one hand (or even one finger – Gremlin's *Team Suzuki*). Despite it being unusually 'safe' for a Psygnosis release, then, *Red Zone* may just do for bikes what *Formula One GP* did for the four wheelers. All the elements needed to build up a classic racing game are in here: the track with accompanying scenery, the computer controlled bikes, and the external views. All that remains is for things to be tidied up, and hopefully the 3D routines to be smoothed a bit.

As it stands, *Red Zone* is admittedly a little unspectacular looking – usually the last thing you'd expect to find yourself accusing a Psygnosis game of – but remember, with this sort of vector-based game, it's often the last couple of months of development which can make all the difference. Let's wait and see how it looks in May...

YEAR OF THE owl

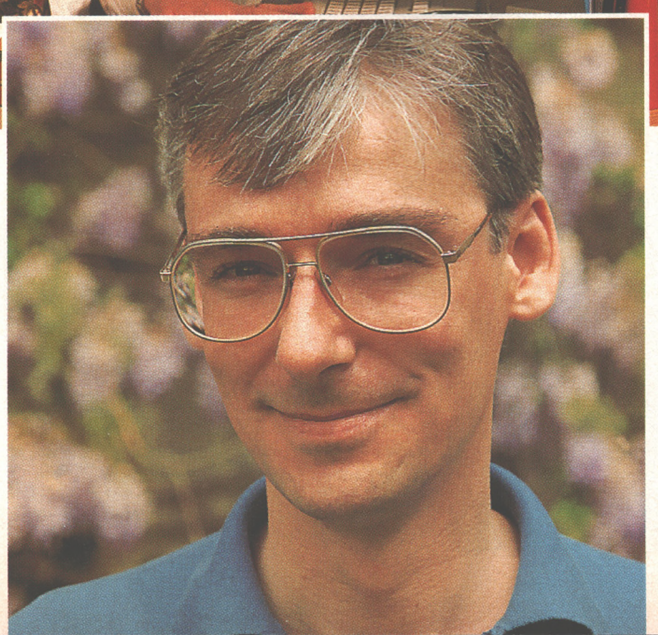
PSYGNO ANALYSIS

Hold on a minute, you're probably asking, who is this man? Well, he's Ian Hetherington, a director of Psygnosis, and he's got a few things to say about the future of computer games...



Over the next three pages one of the most important men in the British computer game industry discusses, in his own words, the development of 16-bit, the advent of CD, and gives us some peeks into the future. First, though, he tells us how Psygnosis came to be...

Ian Hetherington, joint director of Psygnosis – "artistically we're state of the art, but that doesn't mean we're not ready to move on now."



Ian's partner, Jonathan Ellis, who handles the sales and marketing side of Psygnosis (in as much as the two directors share responsibilities at all) and, as such, isn't directly relevant to AMIGA POWER at all...

Ian Hetherington: in his own words

"The company was founded in July 1984 from the remains of Imagine Software. Our idea was to develop 16-bit products only, which no one else was doing at the time. It proved to be the right idea, just too early – the market didn't develop as fast as we thought it would, so the company grew very slowly. We started out doing just one product every two years!

"This went on for a few years, but after a while Jonathan and I started to get frustrated with the direction Psygnosis was moving in, which lead to us buy the whole thing in September '88. That left us free to run things as we wanted, and our growth since then has been fairly meteoric.

"Our taking over the company more or less coincided with the 16-bit market becoming a volume business. This was when we started to use outside creators to develop our products, and also to experiment more – we didn't want to carry on doing arcade adventures, platform games and so on which were identical to the ST versions. We were probably the first to say 'we believe in the Amiga and in the sort of game you should be playing on this machine', and that's something to be proud of."

On 'Psygnosis' and other weird names

"The name Psygnosis means nothing, basically. It was about the fifth possible one we came up with – others ideas were Synopsis, Synergistic, things like that. Basically the name is drawn from two latin words, 'Psy' and 'Gnosis'. Psy means 'of the mind' and 'Gnosis' is knowledge.

"The weird game names are born out of frustration. We're always trying to think of a name for our games about a week before we do the packaging, and quite often products eventually appear under the incorrect name because we use so many different ones during development it gets very confusing!"

On Imagine Software

"We obviously learned a lot from the failure of Imagine, if only not to repeat the same mistakes! It wasn't all bad though – we learned the value of good software there too.

"The thinking behind *Bandersnatch* and *Psyclapse* (*two ground breaking but never released games from Imagine -Ed*) helped to form *Brattacus*, our first release – particularly the idea of not compromising the design just to make the programming easier. We still ended up with a four colour game on the Amiga with a peculiar and unpopular mouse control, but I think it showed the way."

On *Shadow of the Beast*

"What we did with this was completely pre-meditated – the sort of decision we're in the habit of making against our commercial better judgement. At the time the ST held 60 percent of the market, but we believed that the Amiga would win out in the end, so we simply asked our developers to do the best they possibly could using the Amiga's hardware, and not to worry about doing an ST version at all.

"They were very nervous about the whole business, understandably, and I had to keep reassuring them that they weren't actually the ones taking the financial risk. The game we came up with was *Shadow Of The Beast*, which I think shifted the goalposts for Amiga games – in those days nobody had seen anything like it.

"We had a great game, then, but it left us with a marketing problem – just how were we to tell people what an extremely different product we'd got here? In the end we decided to go for the a double sized horizontal box with a bonus T-shirt in it – quite a gamble at the time. We ordered 20,000 T-shirts, and it was only when the lorry arrived with them all that we realised we had nowhere to put them! It brought home the magnitude of the risk we were taking, but in the end we needn't have worried – the game sold out in three days!"

On Zen and the art of gameplay

"These last couple of years we've been able to take technical excellence more or less for granted and focus on gameplay instead. We'll be concentrating on that completely now, which means you'll see huge changes in the style of our games.

"Yes, I'll admit there was a time when we concentrated on the graphics and put the gameplay second, but the thing is that's exactly what people were after at the time. I'm not standing up saying that *Shadow Of The Beast* is the greatest game ever written, but you have to understand that it was exactly what the Amiga market wanted back then. In its own humble way it contributed to the success of the Amiga."

On other software houses

"As far as the US Golds and Oceans are concerned, I think if you were comparing balance sheet against balance sheet you'd see that we're doing very well, thank you very much. And artistically, we're state of the art, but that doesn't mean we're not ready to move on now. A lot of the work we're concentrating on at the moment, our CD ROM-based stuff especially, is next generation product."

On those darned *Lemmings*

"We've enjoyed the success of *Lemmings*, of course, and it influences you. You look at a product like that, and you analyse it. You find out what's wrong with it – and there *are* things wrong with it – and you say to yourself, 'How's that going to influence our next product design?' *Lemmings 2* will be quite a different product – we probably shouldn't even call it *Lemmings 2* at all.

"The whole *Lemmings* event has been very important for us. We're now very strong in the American market, with our own offices over there – a lot of which we owe to that game. It's very different over there though – the games which do well in the Europe are completely alien to an American audience. Again, that's a design issue, rather than a technical one."

On Experimentation

"Like I said, we've always been at the leading edge technically. What we're now addressing, almost exclusively, are gameplay issues. If you want a classic example of someone doing this successfully, look at *Formula One GP* from MicroProse – it's a simulator, but it can also be played as an arcade game, and it's fantastic. Somebody's looked at simulators, and made them fun.

"So, yes we look at our competitors, and we're not slow to praise them. We're quick to criticise too, though – when we think people are disguising very average games with inflated marketing or licences, we say so. A good product is a good product, and we're realistic about our own material.

"One thing we do, which is I guess different from the US Golds and Oceans of this world, is we try to experiment. We don't just do *Shadow Of The Beast* clones, bu lots of other types too – look at *Nevermind*, *Atomino*, *Infestation* and so on. They're all very different – in some cases unique – and they did okay. Not brilliant, just okay. Some people loved them to death, others hated them. We thought that would happen when we decided to develop them, but without that philosophy you wouldn't get something like, say, *Lemmings*. You only get that kind of game if you're prepared to take a risk."

On hyping a game

"We simply don't do it. We don't try to influence reviewers, and we don't try to influence magazines. We simply offer our products up for review and that's it. With *Lemmings* we put out a lot of point of sale, and thousands of demo disks, and asked people to judge for themselves."

On the monolithic company image and 'that' packaging

"The image has pretty much always been a conscious decision. We're interested in promoting the games, but we're interested in promoting the company as a purveyor of quality too, rather than the teams involved. The thing is, that doesn't work as well abroad as in the UK, so we may change.

"It's a different story with the packaging style though – we didn't consciously set out to make a formula of it, but that's what it's become. For the Psygnosis name it's been brilliant, of course, but for the individual products it's perhaps not so good – if you lined up all our games on a shelf, you simply couldn't differentiate between the different types at all. The front of the box simply doesn't depict the game. Nice art, nice pictures, and they look good on the wall, but they're not necessarily good for the individual products. It's something which is under review at the moment."

On freelance programmers

"Psygnosis has an effect on people, in as much as we tend to be able to raise people's aspirations and perception of their own ability. We spend time with our programmers before they really start cutting code, and we like to be involved → right from the

YEAR OF THE owl

right from the beginning of a game.

"We've been brought *Dungeon Master* clones, which are actually technically better than *Dungeon Master*, but we turn them away because they don't move the state of the art on. If we have, say, twenty Amiga games under development, ten of them will be mainstream, five of them will be a little bit more eccentric, and five of them will be targeted at the consoles. Effectively what we're doing at the moment is prototyping console material on the Amiga."

On piracy and Ocean's dongle

"Ocean's was a valiant attempt, a shame it failed. Piracy will cease to be a problem though. Quite simply, there will be nothing left to copy. We can make a lot more money in the cartridge and CD ROM businesses if necessary. We don't have to scratch around with floppy disks, fuelling the pirate network."

On *Sonic The Hedgehog*

"Look at a product like *Sonic The Hedgehog*. Why has it been so successful? Most people in Europe would say it's because it's fast, and it's cute, but that isn't the whole story. And it's not hype either. The reason it has done so well is, again, because it's exactly what the consumers want. They want a game that's graphically pleasing and with reasonably simple gameplay.

"You can complete *Sonic* within five hours of taking it out of the box, and people in the UK would level that as a criticism, yet in America it's exactly what they're after – they want the gratification of finishing, and the pleasure of participating. They don't want to get stuck, and they don't like to be defeated. The thrill isn't in the conquest of a problem, it's in the participation. We believe that's going to be true of CD ROM products, and it requires you to produce a different kind of game."

On the future of CD

"There is no doubt, in our opinion, that within three to five years all games will be delivered on CD. Somebody tell me why not. It's cost effective, there's a distinct benefit in the medium, and there's some opportunity for standardisation. We believe in CD ROM 100 percent.

"There're two ways to approach the CD business. You can always take conventional product onto CD – some games lend themselves to that, such as the Sierra and Origin games. But there's another CD concept, the one we believe in, where you have 300 or 400 megabytes of graphics, and 100 to 200 megabytes of audio, and the result is a movie-type, fully interactive product. I don't want use those terms, they're so clichéd, but that's what you've got.

"I think the whole CD ROM thing will go ballistic"

"Our first CD release is the tip of the iceberg, basically. The reason laser-disc systems have never taken off is simply because of the quality of the programming. Our new CD game *Microcosm* is a demonstration of the technology, and as such it will be a milestone – the first game to use 600 megabytes of CD for actual gameplay."

On Virtual Reality

"I think that Virtual Reality relies (as the name implies) on two things – reality of vision, and reality of tactile feedback. Neither of which are possible with current technology, and are never likely to be with home-based technology. It may have a place with hyper-sophisticated arcade machines, but I can't see it. Virtual Reality doesn't do anything for me."

On storyboarding

"Prior to starting a product now we insist on a storyboard and detailed breakdown. We need to know as much as possible about it because you're targeting a market that's maybe 12 to 18 months away. You need to know a) how it fits in with your other products, and b) how it fits in with the market as you perceive it will be.

"Truly spectacular games only happen every now and then, and the difference between a 75 percent product and a 99 percent one is massive – you've always got to be looking for the *Lemmings* standard of game, and you're trying to achieve that at the design stage, not halfway through development.

"If someone walked through the door tomorrow with a finished product, we'd say, 'That looks great, we're very interested. We can probably publish it, but tell us about the *reasons* you've done what you have'. That's what we are anxious to see, people thinking everything through before they start. You may see that in some of the games we release over the next three or four months, but 18 to 20 months down the line, you'll see how that philosophy has shaped *everything* we do."

On the Sizzlers budget label

"This isn't any grand design, it's simply a function of the marketplace. We could have licensed our old products to someone else, but we are *publishers*. If we don't make money there can be no investment in originality. It's simple, really."

On foreign developers

"We've tried to take on board French and German software houses. I've got a lot of respect for French developers when they come up with the likes of *Captain Blood*, *Another World* or *Future Wars*. The French have a flair for graphics and machine interfacing which you don't get in Britain, and you certainly don't get in America. They have a real style to their presentation. If they could get over their obsession with seemingly obscure adventure games – something to do with French logic, I think – things would really start to move along."

On why anyone should buy a Psygnosis game

"Value for money. In America, they say a buck an hour. A buck for every hour of entertainment. Maybe we should charge a 100 dollars for our products!"

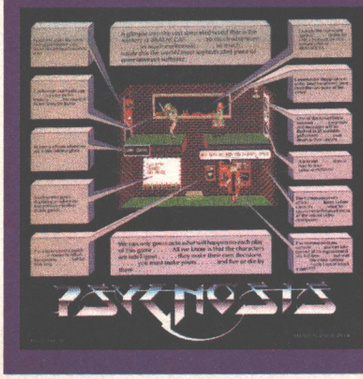
On the future of Psygnosis

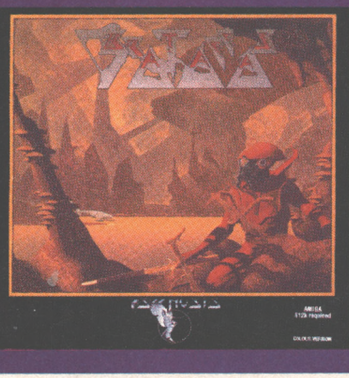
"I think the whole CD thing will go ballistic. If some of the hardware manufacturer's forecasts are to be believed, by the end of the century there will be between 200 and 300 million CD ROM players out there. If you can address that market properly, you could possibly sell 20 million units at a retail price of, say, 29 dollars. If that happens, all of a sudden the 'interactive product' is a bigger revenue generator than your average movie!

"In actual fact, I think what will happen is there will become a complete blurring of what a game is, what a film is, and whatever. The software houses will become part of the movie production environment, interactive product will have as much significance as the movie, and one will market the other. The whole parameters of the business will change completely. And that's what we're planning for now." ●

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD...

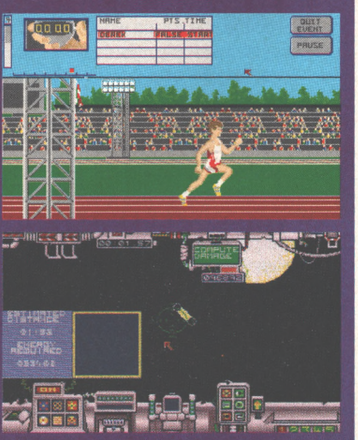
...and the word was *Brattacus*. It was, some said, a bit of a dumb word. And nobody could spell it properly. But it represented the first faltering steps into the world of 16-bit games, both for Psygnosis and the games industry as a whole. Looking back on *Brattacus* now it looks laughably primitive, but I'll never forget first seeing it back in '86 – this was, quite clearly, the future of computer games.





Next up Psygnosis offered *Arena*, a decathlon game, the prime attraction of which was the fluid graphics. It was pretty unplayable though – today the most interesting thing about it is the loading screen, which reveals a familiar programmer's name, one Ian Hetherington!

Later came *Deep Space*, an attempt to emulate the *Star Trek* and *Star Raiders* games of the day, adding complex rotating 3D sprite routines. The result was once again rather rudimentary, but it's from these humble beginnings the most innovative of our major software developers grew. – *Mark Ramshaw*



Top: Psygnsosis decathlon clone *Arena*. Below: The ponderous *Deep Space*.

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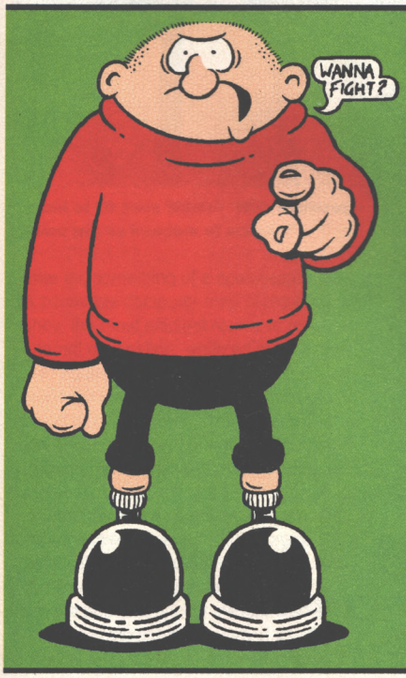

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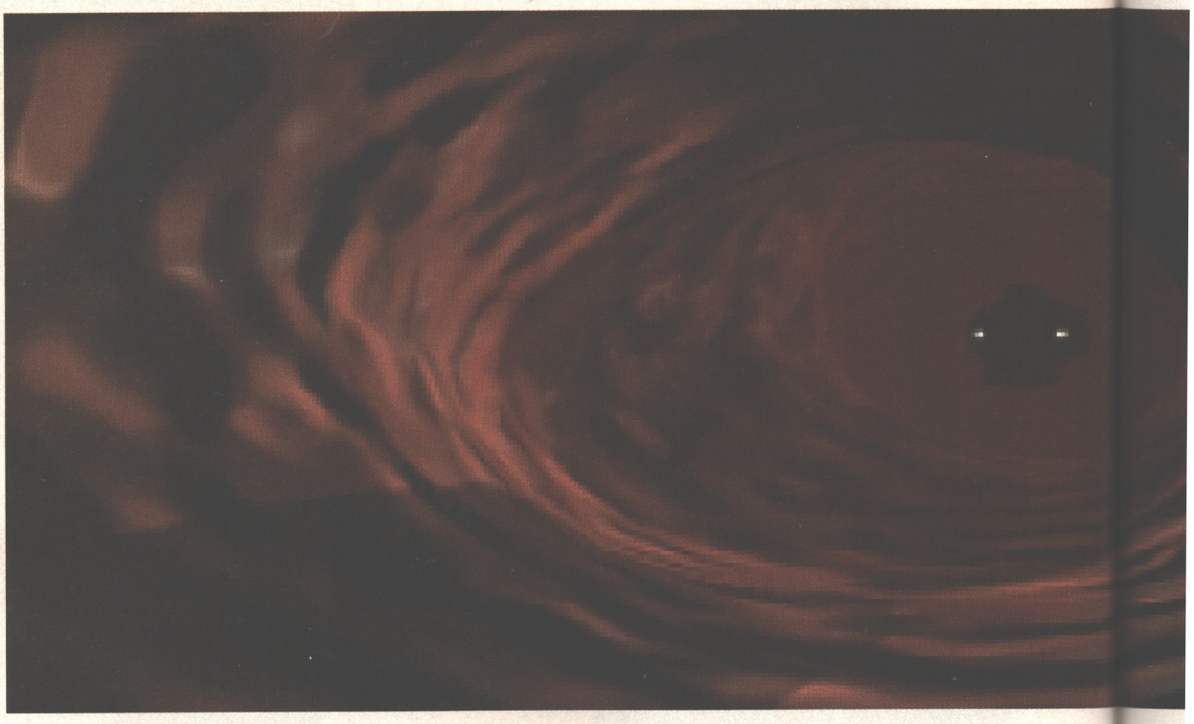


COSMIC THING

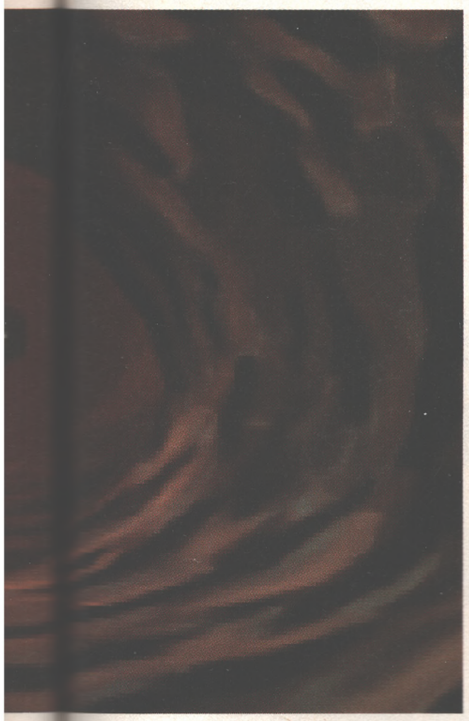
This is *Microcosm* – the first workable incarnation of Psygnosis' CD visions. Visually it's breathtaking, but if this is this really to be the first of a new breed of game, is the technology up to it? Just how far can CD be pushed?

Molecular reduction technology and a plot to inject an assassin into the president are just two of the wild and wonderful (if not entirely original) components to the plot of *Microcosm*. As you may have guessed, *Microcosm* takes its cue from the films Innerspace and Fantastic Voyage, putting the player in control of a miniaturised vessel, placed inside the president's body, on a race against time to eradicate all hostile bodies injected by the traitorous Dr Knowles. These include GreyM, a thought transmitter/bomb (enabling the conspirators to know exactly what the president is thinking), a human-piloted maintenance ship and assorted nasties.

It's a less-than-original plot, then, so what makes it so special? Well, imagine playing a game with visuals equal to those in an animated movie, but *without* the gameplay limitations of the Bluth things. Interested? Then read on...

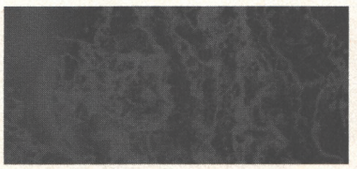
Imagine, as the Psygnosis blurb says,"a fully interactive exploration of an anatomically-correct body". This just doesn't mean that the basic organs are there. Every vein, artery and internal pathway is mapped out correctly, and the player is capable of directing his sub down any route, and shooting anything at any time. There is, so it's claimed, real freedom of movement – a fully interactive game lies behind those stunning graphics! And believe me, you ain't seen nothing until you've seen them move. The walls of veins pulsate and light from the sub illuminates every curve, bump and detail. *Microcosm* actually looks like a movie.

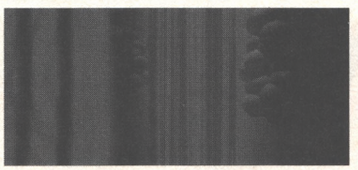
In play there's an 'on-board' computer which can be accessed. Finding the right way around a human body is,

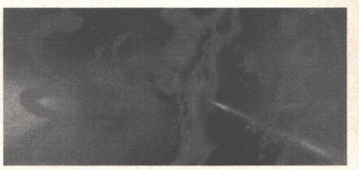


Left: One of many stunning 'between' screens from Psygnosis' new CD project *Microcosm*. Having chosen to 'fly' your craft down a particular vein, the camera cuts to an outside view, as the craft does a flyby. It really is just like a scene from the movie Innerspace – the line between computer graphics and film blurred more than ever.

Below: A selection of various out-of-cockpit views. The fleshy artery walls actually pulsate with the heart-beat, and any of the millions of fleshy strands visible can, it is claimed, be cut away!







YEAR OF THE owl

Head of CD Dave Worrel: "With *Microcosm* there will be freedom of actions."

after all, something of a complicated task. A zoomable computer map of the body will show the most efficient routes to reach an internal destination, while different tactics are required in each different area. In the heart, for instance, there's the rush of blood to contend with. The result is that the player's craft accelerates, shooting through the arteries with the pumping of the heart. Located in the heart is a sensor device which must be destroyed – failure results in the GreyM bomb self-destructing (and thus blowing the unfortunate president's head to pieces!). Missing the sensor means having to loop back round through the bloodstream before hurtling straight back into the heart.

The final objective is the brain, where the main enemy sub, GreyM, is located. Not only must GreyM be deactivated and the controlling devices in the brain removed, but there are the brain's own electrical storms and energy fields to navigate. Even if all these tasks and obstacles are conquered, there's still the journey to the exit point to make. And, as with all delicate operations, there're always further complications to deal with.

In addition to all these location-dependant hazards, there're also the aqua droids which patrol the body. Each of these possesses a unique set of weaponry, and therefore requires a different strategy to destroy.

YOU'RE SO VEIN

The *Microcosm* visuals are created using 3D ray-traced computer animation in conjunction with a purpose-written fractal engine. The result is first and third person views of a body – from the inside. Although the environment is pregenerated, everything will, it is claimed, be totally controllable. With at least 2 hours of these visuals there's a helluva lot body to be explored.

In addition to the weapons and sensor systems, the player also has access to a 'hyper-text' like database, crammed with information on the human body, knowledge which can then be used to progress through your mission.

"A fully interactive game lies behind the graphics"

SHINY HAPPY MEDIUM

This all *sounds* impressive. But CD is still something of an unknown quantity – all we've seen so far are second rate stabs at interactive video. Why should *Microcosm* be any different? Well, the fact that Psygnosis are putting so much time and money into project development suggests that they know what they're doing. And the reluctance to discuss how the CD software actually patches everything together (they told us to mind our own business!) suggests that they really are doing something innovative. The utterly stunning *Planetside* demo they produced when Commodore launched the CD-TV was apparently just a tiny taster of what the Psygnosis programmers can do with the technology.

"Imagine visuals equal to those in movies"

The other big question mark concerns the track record of CD and laser disc games. Up until now they've all suffered from very limited, almost non-interactive, design. The method of displaying some animation, and then letting the player choose the next 'branch' of the story, seems to have been the be all and end all so far. What's to stop *Microcosm* having the same limitations?

A lot, according to Dave Worrel, head of CD ROM development at Psygnosis disagrees: "As far as we're concerned, there is no accepted CD game design of branches. With *Microcosm*, as far as the player is concerned, there will be complete freedom of action".

And there we have it. *Microcosm* is due out at the end of '92 or the beginning of '93 – and it won't be alone! Psygnosis are currently in the process of setting up between three and eight CD-specific titles for release over the next few years. By Christmas '94 Psygnosis aim to have re-defined the entire computer market as we know it. Yes, dammit, all over again. ●

The men behind *Microcosm* – the in-house Psygnosis CD development team.

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Work
IN PROGRESS

MEGA MANI
THE DIARY OF

The idea behind this series is simple. We're going to show you exactly what goes into the development of a major new game from the programmer's point of view – from initial game design through the entire programming process right up to playtesting and its eventual release. Hopefully it'll give you quite an insight into the whole games-creation process, and perhaps even explain the problems that make some games come out as they do.

The Sensible team: a jolly bunch of chaps.

We had the idea, then – our next job was simply finding a suitable game to write about. Eventually we settled on *Mega lo Mania II* for a number of reasons. For a start, it's an original project which is being developed with the Amiga specifically in mind – it's not simply a coin-op conversion (which would give us precious little to write about), nor is it a game that's been developed for the PC and then cut down for the Amiga. The fact that it's a sequel helps too – the developers are unlikely to be worried about the series revealing too much about their new baby, seeing as everyone knows roughly what it'll be about already – as, indeed, does its not-yet-picked-up-by-any-software-house-status (we can't be accused of favouritism, you see). Finally, of course, there's the fact that Sensible are a jolly bunch of chaps and were keen to get involved. But enough of this. Heeeeeere's David... ●

Welcome to Part Two of our ongoing Diary Of A Game feature. the continuing development of Sensible Software's big Christ told to us by the programmer himself, David 'Ubik' Korn...

MEGA LO MANIA II – WHAT HAPPENED IN JANUARY

David 'Ubik' Korn, programmer of *Mega lo Mania II*, gulps down two pints of orange juice, snaffles half a packet of Resolve and – Christmas hangover more or less under control – settles down to tell us how he started the year with *Mega lo Mania II*...

David 'Ubik' Korn, programmer of *Mega lo Mania II* – no, it's not that he only owns one set of clothes (we think), but that this pic was taken at the same time as last month's...

Monday 6 January – Friday 10 January

Welcome to another month's adventures in the wacky world of games programming. I spent the early part of this week recovering from my rather groovy Christmas holidays – did anyone else go to the New Year's rave at the Chalk Farm Roadhouse? – but the hangover had cleared up nicely by mid-week and it was back to work.

My first task of the new year is to modify the code for the game's 3D graphics so that it can display a zoomed out view. In principle it's fairly simple – enlarge the terrain map from 16x22 to 32x44 and half the size of the triangles. In practice it takes a few days, as I have to go through all my code finding the parts that relate to the size and scale of the map and making them work for both views. An important programming hint here: always use variables to store important details like map size so that if you change your mind later, you only need to change the value stored in the variable, not the whole thing.

Monday 13 January – Friday 17 January

Quite a quiet week, this. To begin with, I spend a while adapting the editor to the new zoom in/out display, rewriting a few chunks of it to do things more simply, efficiently or just properly. At the moment, in zoom out mode, it keeps a table of all the triangles which is 64K long; this is a luxury I won't be able to allow myself in the finished version, but it makes the editor a lot simpler to write. I also write some code to add a new mode to the editor that allows you to chose the various fill colours (land, sea, mountains, snow) and paint them onto the landscape.

So far, so useful. Friday, however, is spent with the AMIGA POWER team, taking those silly photographs you see scattered around these pages. The closest I get to working is pretending to program while posing for the pictures! Hey ho.

Monday 20 January – Friday 24 January

Although this game is going to be *Mega lo Mania II*, and as such should bear more than just a passing resemblance to the original, at the same time it must have enough of a new emphasis and sufficient new ideas to justify its existence. In short, it must be the same as the original, only different.

To this end I've been spending a lot of time thinking about the original, and trying to work out exactly what I should add, remove or change. The new appearance for the landscape is a start, but at the moment it's only cosmetic. As mentioned last month, I want the landscape to be more interactive than it was in the original and a much more important part of the game, with continents

Work IN PROGRESS

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A GAME

Every month we're going to report on mas 1992 release, *Mega lo Mania II*, as

drifting, mountains growing and so on. Another thing which I didn't like very much about the original was the way all the different sectors under your control were essentially independent of each other. For example, if you designed a weapon in one sector, all your other sectors still have to invent it independently – you can't move a weapon around between them, and similarly, elements that you mine in one sector can't be moved to others either.

I can't quite see the point of this myself, and am determined to change it. Indeed, I've pretty much decided that I want *Mega lo Mania II* to be much more a game of empire building than the first one was. I've been thinking about the way civilisations develop, and it seems to me that transport and communications play a vital role in linking small settlements into larger and more vital societies.

I'm playing around with ways to do this in my mind, then one night I wake up in the early hours with a stroke of inspiration – roads! Building these between your towers would let you transport armies, blueprints, elements and so on from sector to sector with ease. Instantly you've got a much more dynamic game.

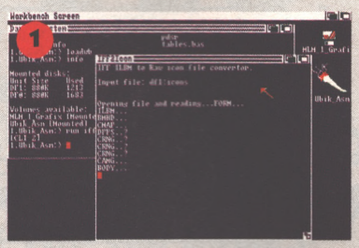
Just think: areas which are rich in elements can specialise in mining, others in producing items in factories. Sectors around the edge of the empire would have a concentration of armies to defend your borders (since a road network makes travel easier for invading armies as well) – society becomes much more organised and efficient. At early tech levels, transport will take simpler forms – walking on foot at the lowest tech level, progressing through horse and cart, canals, roads and railways as you move through the game. The possibilities are endless. Satisfied with this development I scribble a few quick notes and sink back to sleep.

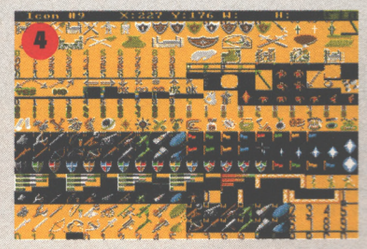
Monday 27 January – Friday 31 January

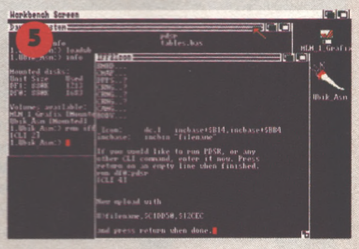
This week I've been working on the actual game itself! As we've decided to keep a menu system similar to that of the original *Mega lo Mania*, that seems like a good place to start. First I'll need a routine to clear areas of the screen (tap, tap tap...) and another to plot icons (tap, tap, tap... they're very quick to write, thanks to the magic of the blitter). Next, a few simple routines to manage menus, redrawing them when they change, taking action when you click on one of the icons. I can transfer the menus from the original *Mega lo Mania code* (thanks CJ) and use DPaint to convert the original icon graphics to my new palate. All this will change as I go along, but it's easier to take something that already exists and gradually mould it into the shape of the new game as work progresses than start from scratch to no purpose. I don't fancy typing loads of data for hundreds of icons into the code, so I spend the last few days of the week writing an icon grabber.

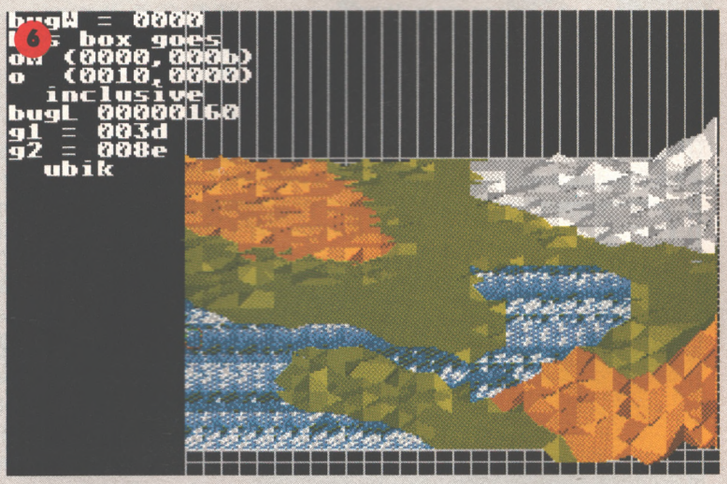
"A what?", you ask. Well, an icon grabber is not a dangerous beast that preys on harmless little icons, oh no, but a neat utility program. When I run it I can enter the name of a DPaint file, which it loads and displays on the screen. It then lets me outline around the icons one after the other with the mouse, and, when I've finished it, arranges all the graphics, along with data about the sizes and position of the icons, into a convenient format for the game code, before sending it up to the PC on my development system.

Programming a game is a lot easier if you have a few utilities to hand – though, that said, it's easy to spend too much time refining your utilities and making them nice to use and not enough actually working. Tune in next month to see if I can tear myself away..! ●



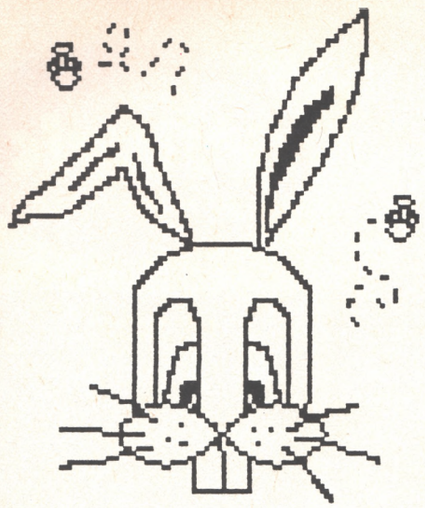






Alright, let's take it from the top, left to right. First up, we've got a screen showing Ubik starting up the sprite grabber and reading a DPaint file (1), followed by it displaying the sprites on the screen (2). Ubik can then outline the sprites (3), which takes a while to do. Eventually he gets them all done (4), presses a key and the grabber tells him what to load up onto his development system (5). Voila, the finished landscape editor (6)!

● Next month: more of the same, including lots of interesting stuff about menus (or so he promises us). Bet you can hardly wait, eh?



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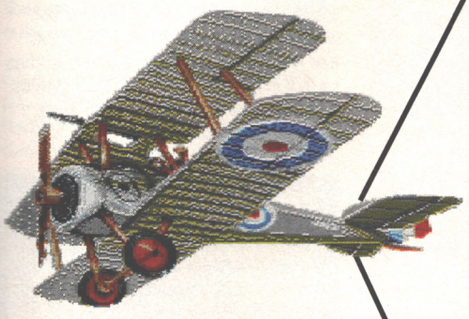

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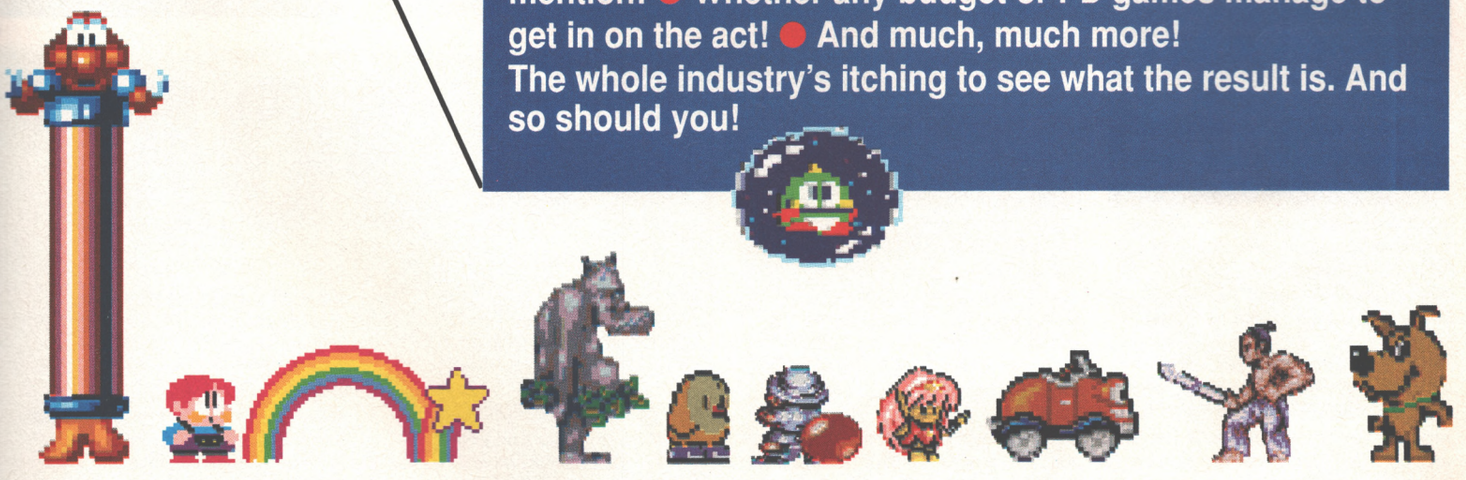

ALL-TIME TOP GAMES

Just check out the guys above. They're all queuing up to see which, if any of them, will get to be Number One in our Top 100 Games! Will Robocod's extendible body whisk him to the top placing, or will Tam'n'Rit climb their ladders to stardom? All will be revealed next month in the biggest, most controversial – dammit, *best* – round-up of Amiga entertainment ever!

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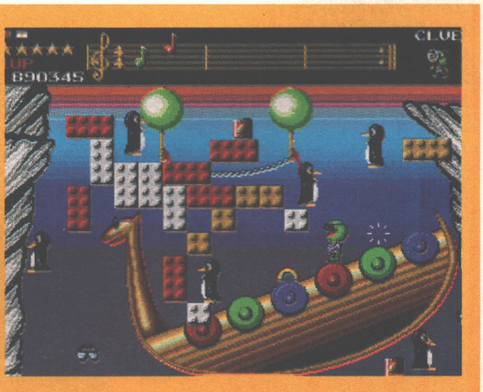


AP

GAME REVIEWS CONTINUED

Oh no! Only two lines to tell you about all our fabulous reviews, including...

RED BARON

Publisher: Dynamix
Price: £34.99
Authors: Damon Slye (design), Paul Bowman, David McClurg, Lincoln Hutton (programming) and others
Release: Out now

An external view of *Red Baron*'s sluggish action. Believe us, it's not half as impressive as it looks here. For prop plane kicks we recommend you opt for the infinitely better *Knights Of The Sky*.

World War I flight 'n' fight simulations seem to be all the rage these days, what with Cinemaware's ageing *Wings* on re-release, MicroProse's *Knights Of The Sky* and, erm, *Red Baron*. Well, some of the rage then.

The more direct nature of the era's combat offers tremendous playability possibilities – far more skill and courage was demanded of the pilot than is by today's flying machines – so it's kind of surprising that it's taken this long for it to come into vogue, really. Dynamix's contribution to the current fad is *Red Baron*, and it's an undeniably impressive-looking package. Sat snugly alongside the three disks in the big box are three double-sided maps, a natty little reference card, and a dirty great ring-bound book detailing the history of the great war, flight in general, missions, medals, tactics, the aircraft, and, of course, the controls and how to play. It really is comprehensive, if perhaps a little bit dull.

Even so, *Red Baron* seems to have everything going for it. Or at least, it does until you get round to loading it – and discover that not only are all three disks used before you actually get off the ground, but that once you're in the air you wish you'd never left the box. Far too much time is spent swapping disks and waiting for portions of program to load, resulting in flight that's just too damn slow and unconvincing.

It's not as if *Red Baron*'s without its frills or options though. Among the dozens of facilities on offer are dogfighting a famous ace from history, flying one of many varied missions and embarking on a whole mission-packed career. Almost every worthwhile detail of these single missions can be changed too – things like the opponent's plane type and the mission locations – and there's even the facility to 'video-tape' and edit your performance.

What else? Well, there are plenty of different viewpoints to choose between, which can make for varied 'recordings', plus variable weather conditions and even a sun blind spot. Every possible option you could think of (plus a few that you probably couldn't) is here. Hell, you can even fly – simultaneously – every plane in a small squadron of fighters, all at once!

The thing is though, all this is provided you can endure all the waiting around. In effect, all the time and effort spend researching *Red Baron* and putting it together has been wasted simply because the damn thing's all but unplayable – there's slow and there's slow and then there's *Red Baron*. Proof once again that the Amiga – or perhaps just American programmers working on the Amiga – can't emulate big PC games.

If you want a simulation of World War 1 aerial combat, then, go for *Wings* or better still MicroProse's *Knights Of The Sky*. I don't know for sure if *Knights Of The Sky* is any more accurate technically, and I don't care either – it's believable enough for me, but, more importantly, it's fun to fly.

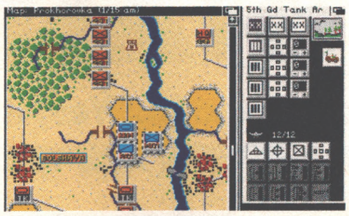
● *GARY PENN*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Sure, *Red Baron*'s probably as historically and technically accurate as anyone could wish for, but at the end of the day there's no denying the fact that it plays like a brick, and it bloody well shouldn't, so that's why the mark's so low. One meg only too.

19 PERCENT

PANZER BATTLES

Publisher: Strategic Studies Group
Price: £25.99
Authors: Roger Keating, Danny Stevens, Ian Trout
Release: Out now



Can't you just tell that it's a wargame?

The panzers were the crack German tank divisions used on the Russian front during the second part of World War II. In *Panzer Battles*, you get the chance to re-enact a series of panzer battles: the attack on Minsk in June 1941, the invasion of Moscow in December 1941, the Russian offensive on Kharkov in May 1942, the... er, the attack on Prokhorovka in July 1943, er, the... er... ZZZzzzz... *(Slap, slap! – Ed)*.

Oops, sorry. And what jolly good fun it is too. As your flashing squares surge across the map you'll get the chance to set their objectives, examine their divisional attributes, initiate a range of different offensive and defensive stances, everything you'd hope, really. The graphics are bright and colourful, the strategy is complex and flexible, and the only real problems are the sluggish drawing of windows and the vast array of obscure icons you've got to work out – a word's worth a thousand pictures, in my opinion.

The more alert among you will already have spotted that this uses the editable Battlefont game system, as also used by *Halls of Montezuma* (which I was landed with in issue four). So in theory, you could do all this lot yourself with the editor that came with your copy of *Halls* – or even buy this and do your own *Halls* – but it would take ages and you'd probably be seeing flashing squares before the eyes by the end of it.

I'm afraid I didn't have time to explore the game's more deeply buried intricacies, but I remember *Halls* vividly and feel sure that *Panzer Battles* matches up to it in every way. In fact, the graphics are prettier so I'll give it an extra point.

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
More wargaming fun for *Halls of Montezuma* lovers, and a complete and utter load of twaddle for everyone else (as usual).

62 PERCENT

VROOM

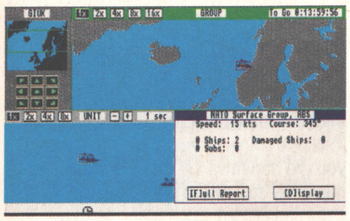
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Price: £25.99
Authors: Lankhor
Release: Early April

You might have thought that with *Lotus 2* and *Formula One Grand Prix* both released in the last few months, both ends of the Amiga driving game market (arcade and simulation) were firmly tied up. Lankhor obviously think differently though, and have cleverly come up with a game which falls more or less right in between the two. Indeed, *Vroom* is actually two games in one – there's an 'arcade' mode, which is a straightforward heads-

Life in the fast lane (actually that one on the left is pretty nippy too). The graphics may look pretty unspectacular here, but in motion *Vroom* is something else.

THE MED CONFLICT – BATTLESET 3

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: £14.99
Authors: Three Sixty
Release: Out now



***Battleset 3* – with added air power and a more topical scenario.**

Great, you're probably thinking if you've played through *Harpoon*'s 'Showdown in the North Atlantic' and 'North Atlantic Convoys' scenarios, zapping the Soviets and getting a bit fed up with the rather samey North Atlantic scenery. (After all, there are only so many icebergs a man can take). Here's the third expansion disk, which you're going to have to fork out an extra fifteen quid for, and which features 16 new Mediterranean games to play and lots of new equipment to use.

You'll be delighted to note that *Battleset 3* gives you the chance to pit your navy against not just the Soviets but also the Arabs and the Israelis. You can even fight out Arab/Israeli conflicts if you want. And on top of that are a whole load of new ships and planes, including hydrofoils, attack helicopters and Type 209 submarines. (Fwoar, eh?)

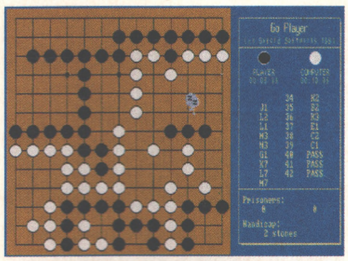
It's hard to know what else to say, really. Playing through a few of the scenarios, I did find they were just a touch more exciting than their *Battleset 1* and *2* predecessors (if that's possible), perhaps because of their greater proximity to reality, and also the increased emphasis on air power which makes things move a lot faster. Other than that, though...

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A worthy addition to the *Harpoon* stable, and nicely priced too. (You will, of course, need the original *Harpoon*.)
65 PERCENT

GO

Publisher: Oxford Softworks
Authors: CP Software
Price: £19.99
Release: Out now



Feeling board? Then come on, let's *Go*. (*I thought I fired you last month – Ed*).

Computer boardgames are the bane of a reviewer's life. Generally they're perfectly competent conversions of the original, but substituting computer opponents for human interaction, which presents a dilemma – do you mark the original game, the accuracy of the conversion, or the concept of transferring it to computer in the first place? In this case, I think I'll mark the original game, 'cos I've wanted to get into *Go* (a deeply strategic Japanese thing which is almost certainly the oldest board game in existence) for ages, so anything which saves me the trip to Tokyo to actually find someone else who can play it has to be a good thing.

This version (one meg only as far as I can tell, one player only, but with lots of difficulty options, and apparently the European Computer Go Champion) doesn't dress things up to any extent, but it plays a fine game of Go (which is to say it thrashes me easily every time) and it's fairly quick about it (well, until you up the skill level, that is). You can play it at one of 101 skill levels, on a board measuring from 9x9 to 19x19 points (the bigger the board, the more complicated the game), and pre-configure the board to any set-up position you like, for practice on specific plays or as a neat handicapping system (as practiced in the real thing with specific handicap set-ups, also included here). The instructions are brief but pretty comprehensive, and basically everything you need to become a respectable Go player is here.

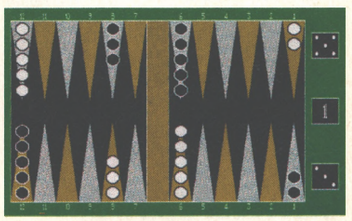
For once, too, this is a justifiable conversion – Go players in the UK are few and far between, so providing an opponent for potential fans is actually a worthwhile gesture. Broaden your horizons, buy this.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
One of the most enjoyable and absorbing board games yet seen, and at a sensible price too. Go is a fascinating game, and this is a good introduction to it. Surprise yourself.
80 PERCENT

BACKGAMMON ROYALE

Publisher: Oxford Softworks
Price: £19.99
Authors: CP Software
Release: Out now



***Backgammon* – previously experience is a must before you play this version.**

Of course, I've never played Backgammon before in my life. Just as, until I joined the AMIGA POWER reviewing team, the pleasures of wargames, adventure games, RPGs and weird foreign titles had escaped me. But there's a first time for everything, so I sat down with the 'Rules of Play' section of the manual and determined to discover just how all those black and white zigzags and counters fit together.

Several hours later, with the manual wedged firmly in the bin and the Amiga quaking with my every touch, all I'd discovered was that *Backgammon Royale* is no way to learn how to play backgammon. The rules, while actually being very simple (as I eventually discovered from a helpful friend), are so badly explained and encrypted with jargon that newcomers would probably find more of relevance in an Argos catalogue. This is clearly for experienced Backgammon players only (or ones with →

Who needs racing realism when a game plays this fast?

down racing game which you win simply by overtaking lots of other cars, and a 'simulation' mode which takes things a deal more seriously, with qualifying laps, pit stops, championship point scoring, more realistic handling and all that kind of thing.

Unlike the well-received ST version, both these game styles give you the option of joystick or mouse control (with finely adjustable mouse sensitivity – you can alter acceleration/brake sensitivity and left/right sensitivity separately), and controllability is one of the game's strong points, although *Lotus 2*'s fire-button-to-accelerate option would have improved matters even further.

The other main thing *Vroom*'s got going for it is speed. This game really shifts, leaving both *Lotus* games firmly in its slipstream, but never quite getting so fast that you don't feel in control, and that's the perfect speed in my book. Come to that, in many ways this is the perfect driving game as far as I'm concerned – unlike *F1 GP* (you do all have that by now, don't you? I hope so) you can just pick it up for a quick burst of racing thrills, and unlike *Lotus 2* it isn't useless once you've finished it. Even when you've been through all six courses you'll still want to improve your championship scores or shave seconds off your best lap

Pulling into the pits – hey, where are my crew? Get that engine repaired! (Etc.)

Getting (ahem) 'tunnel' vision in *Vroom*. Notice the realistically tight roads.

times (time records and points can be saved to disk at any time if you don't want to play a whole championship at once, or, if you prefer, you can simply choose a shorter championship by opting to race on all, some or just one of the courses available). And of course, as an arcade game it's as timeless as these things nearly always are.

While the *Lotus* games score over *Vroom* with their two-players-on-one-screen option, you can still play this with another Amiga (or ST) owning chum, as *Vroom* allows you to connect two machines either physically or by telephone, with the use of a null modem link. Other options include the traditional manual/auto gear selection, the chance to race any number of laps on any of the courses for practice, a strange graphical 'zoom' facility which doesn't seem to do anything of any great significance and the availability of a help key which automatically sets your car on the right trajectory, but really these (along with the lovely and convincing sound) are just a few tiny dabs of icing on an already-beautiful cake. In what's been a pretty good month for games of all sorts, I'm afraid I'm going to make yet another demand on your protesting wallets. Yep, I'm going to tell you to buy this one, too.

●*STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Faster than *F1 GP*, more playable than *Lotus Turbo Challenge 2*, prettier than *Outrun Europa* and a sillier name than *Super Hang-On*, this is a winner all the way – perhaps the best all-round traditional driving game yet. It's a shame there aren't more courses, but you can't have everything, I guess.
88 PERCENT

'experienced' friends).

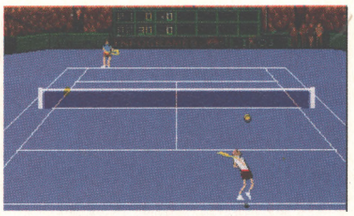
And even then, who's going to want to sacrifice the feel of wood and felt (or whatever) for that of *Backgammon Royale*'s crude, computery interface? Assuming you do, you'll be pleased to find all the features you'd expect – saving, taking back moves, but no 'suggest move' option, something that might have helped beginners. You're also likely to find your computerised opponents remarkably easy to beat (within the constraints of a largely luck-based game). So, er, there we are.

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
All the bits are there, but it seems a little pointless. And the manual is terrible.
45 PERCENT

ADVANTAGE TENNIS

Publisher: Infogrames
Price: £25.99
Authors: In house
Release: Out now



***Advantage Tennis* has some pretty fluid character movement, but *you* just try hitting that ball. It ain't easy...**

Tennis sims have come a long way since *Pong*. OK, so *Advantage Tennis* doesn't feature waiting around for the rain to stop or whinging letters from Star Trek fans to Points of View moaning that Wimbledon has postponed The Next Generation (*Get on with it – Ed*) but in many other ways it's spot on – men jiggling around just before the serve like they want to go to the toilet, tantrums over bad shots, terrible refereeing decisions, and vile blue indoor courts where the ball whizzes past your ear before you have a chance to move.

Advantage Tennis attempts to capture all the excitement of World Tournament tennis. You start a tournament seeded 100 and try to make your way up the ranks by winning games. There are tournaments held all over the world – Australia, North America, England (yep, Wimbledon's in there), both indoors and outdoors. After each tournament, depending on how well you've done, you come away with a little extra dosh which you can spend on extra tuition to brush up on the shots of your choice.

So, let's go and thrash a few hairy-legged slavs... ah, this is where the problems start. *Advantage Tennis* is not easy. The actual controls are fairly straightforward – on paper at least. Joystick or cursors move you about the court, while the space bar or fire button increases power and the angle of the shot. Combinations of the two produce lob and drop shots. Simple, huh? Well, no actually. The games soon become incredibly fast, and often you find yourself still rooted to the spot wondering how you could ever have been expected to reach a shot. The answer, of course, is to have played a better previous shot in the first place and then positioned yourself correctly for an easy return – a bit like in real tennis! – but that's always been an aspect of the game that's been lost on me.

OK, fine, I thought, I'm prepared to persevere – what I hadn't reckoned with were the incredibly muddy controls. Sometimes your player just refuses to budge in the middle of a rally – a couple of times I even caught him running off in the wrong direction for no reason! Also, trying to judge the angle to hit the ball is next to impossible – 'hold down the button to increase the angle' say the instructions; you might as well tilt the screen for all the good it does most of the time.

Which is a shame because at times the game is quite addictive, and can be good fun. The animation is fluent, with some great dives and reaching shots; there are some nice touches such as a player stamping on his racket after a particularly bad shot too. Saving your player allows you to work your way up the rankings over a number of weeks, and then there's always two-player mode, normally the saving grace of these games. This one's fine, or would be, but if both of you are hopeless the game quickly becomes dull; this is one of those occasions when a computer opponent is actually preferable.

● *DAVE GOLDER*

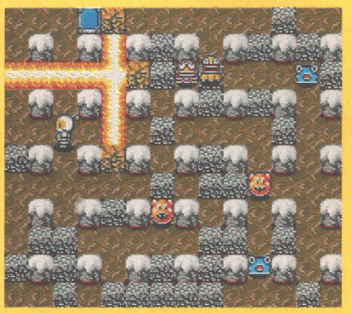
THE BOTTOM LINE
A fairly good looking tennis game, and it has its moments, but ultimately it's just frustrating and a tad dull.
69 PERCENT

DYNA BLASTER BOMBERMAN

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Price: £30.99
Author: Hudson Soft
Release: Early April

When people talk about console-style products on the Amiga they're usually referring to big platform games like *Robocod*, *Harlequin* or similar, but that by no means covers it all. Take *Dyna Blaster/Bomberman*, for instance – a cute, bright little thing with elements of *PacMan*, *Chip's Challenge* and (yes!) our very own issue one covergame *Bombuzal*. This started out on the PC Engine under the name *Bomberman*, went to the Gameboy as *Dyna Blaster* and has now arrived on the Amiga as a PC Engine-perfect conversion under this rather indecisive dual name.

That's not the end of the story though. *Dyna Blaster/Bomberman* really comes into its own with its neat five – yes, five! – player option, providing one of the neatest social computer games since, ooh, *Gauntlet II*. We'll get onto that in a minute, but first, the basic game.



That's you, the little blokey top left – the rest are baddies of various types.

Really, the dullish pics don't do the fast'n'frantic nature of the game justice.

The idea is simple. You play a little *Bomberman* character running around a series of mazes, many of which are but a single screen, and few of which extend to more than two. The mazes are built up of blocks, some of which are solid, and some – which tend to look like bricks or bushes – are not. These can be blown up with the bombs you carry – place your bomb on the ground, dash around a solid corner to safety, and watch as it takes out the more vulnerable bricks or one of the *PacMan*-like baddies who wander around the screen.

In the one player game your task is to take out all the baddies before an exit appears which throws you into the next sub-level. It's worth blowing up a few of the extra blocks before you run off though – some hide an assortment of bomb power-ups, which could prove invaluable on later levels. The whole thing is broken up into eight sections, each with it's own graphic style and subdivided into eight or so screens. Occasional Boss screens with *Volfied*-style snakes curling around them add variety, but that's the basic game, and as a simple one-player thing it's a whole lot of fun.

Where the game really comes into its own is with the multi-player option. *Dyna Blaster/Bomberman* comes with a joystick adaptor which plugs into the parallel port at the back of your Amiga and perhaps helps to explain the inflated price point. Using this, the joystick port, the mouse port and the keyboard you can get up to five people crushed around your Amiga for a frantic multiplayer game.

It's going to be hard to impress upon you just how good this is. Not

The most fun five peo an h

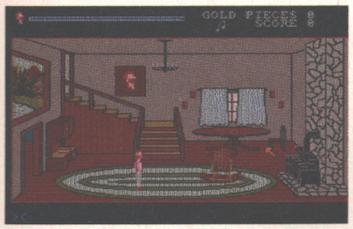
FIVE GO MAD IN DORSET

This is *Dyna Blaster/Bomberman* at its very best – in frantic five player mode. The dynamics of it are slightly tricky, but not impossible – getting four people on joysticks around the computer isn't hard, but fitting number five onto the keyboard in the middle can cause problems – and certainly worth it. The best bit is when a few of you have collected bomb power-ups – you can see one here, it's the little face right in the middle of this screen – and then spend most of your time dashing around, setting traps to blow the other players up.

On this screen, too, you can see the mechanics of the game more closely – both characters on the left of the screen have placed bombs and are hiding around corners, waiting for them to blow up – something you'll spend a lot of the game doing. Little else to say really, except, perhaps, to once again emphasise how much fun it all is.

MADDOG WILLIAMS

Publisher: Game Crafters
Price: £30.99
Release: April



The graphics don't really do the game justice, but a lot of patience is needed.

It's American, it comes on five disks, it can only be another stab at computer gaming's soft underbelly – the animated adventure cinemathingumy game. These can be either extremely good (*Monkey Island*, *Cruise for a Corpse*), or steadfastly average (most other ones). You know by now that if a game falls into the former category it gets a nice double page spread at the front of the magazine, and perhaps a mention on the cover. And if it's tucked away at the back, in an inconspicuous run-on spot, well, it's best not to get too excited...

The 'Maddog Williams' referred to by the game's title is, as you might have guessed, the chap you control in your attempt to thwart some evil somebody or other. But while he's quite happy to sink five pints of beer without displaying any ill effects, and will cheerfully plunge headfirst into icy streams, he seems curiously ignorant of the concept of a bar fight. (He also wears a pink vest.) Still, he's your hero, and you've no choice but to move him around the screen using the joystick and issue commands through a simple text parser. It's just like the sort of thing Sierra were doing five years ago (but, if anything, cruder).

The graphics are really very amateurish indeed – lightyears removed from the current state-of-the-art – and it's mainly this that deterred me from probing the game's hidden depths. I mean, if they can't even be bothered to make it look nice on the outside, what chance do the innards stand? The puzzles I did encounter seemed fairly run-of-the-mill – just a case of guessing what needs to be done and finding the right combination of objects and/or commands to see it through. There are some sword-fighting bits too, but, well, um... Oh, and sudden deaths abound, so save regularly.

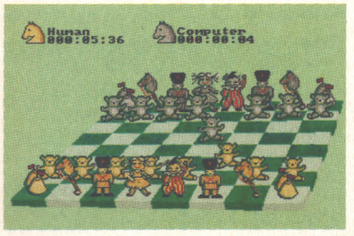
I didn't really like *Maddog Williams* much. (You can tell, can't you?) While it's clear that loads of effort has gone into it, it's effort of the uninspired, not-really-giving-it-100-percent variety, and that never makes for a great game.

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
If you really put your mind to it you could probably enjoy this. Face it, though: there are much better ways of spending the money.
47 PERCENT

CHESS CHAMPION 2175

Publisher: The Oxford Softworks
Price: £19.99
Author: Chris Whittington
Release: Out now



You want outlandish chess sets, we got 'em – teddy bears in *Chess Champion*.

The strength of a good computerised chess game is how much you can learn from it. It should be like having a chess club sat in your living room, the members of which can stretch your playing technique and offer advice on how to improve your game.

Chess Champion 2175, the successor to *Chess Player 2150* (winner of the 1989 British Open Microcomputer Chess Championship), sets about living up to its 2000+ ELO rating (that's a very high level of chess-playing ability) with an impressive bunch of options.

The game can be viewed from either overhead or in perspective, the angle of which can be shifted around to suit, while any of five sets of playing pieces are available. As with all gimmick sets, however, you'll probably ignore the more esoteric pieces in favour of good old Staunton (the standard piece design which you should all be familiar with).

Beginners are catered for by a series of 10 ape-brained opponents, against whom the game's coarser points can be learned, though progressively more difficult levels of play can be accessed as your confidence grows. The tutorial functions are numerous, enabling you to replay moves, take pieces back and try again or even swap sides and see how the computer deals with your hopelessly untenable position. There's also a hint mode available at certain levels of play which offers you a suggested move.

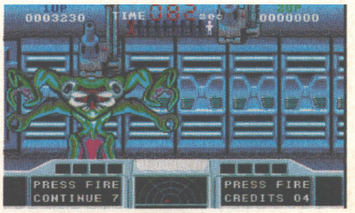
The game's mouse-only control is intuitive, its apparent depth – we're talking a huge library of opening moves here – is awesome and the level of tutoring offered is comprehensive. I'm no expert at chess, but after a short time playing I found the urge to learn more – and beat the rather smug, silent facade of this digital grandmaster – rather strong. It may be that after playing the latest all-bells-and-whistles platform-'em-up, chess seems like far too stuffy a way to pass the evening. Your mistake – *Chess Champ* offers a level of brain burn you'd be hard-pressed to find elsewhere, even down at the local chess club.

● *KARL FOSTER*

THE BOTTOM LINE
It does what it does very well indeed, and presents a great means of improving your game, but if you don't like chess you're stuffed.
80 PERCENT

SPACE GUN

Publisher: Ocean
Price: £25.99
Authors: Images
Release: Out now



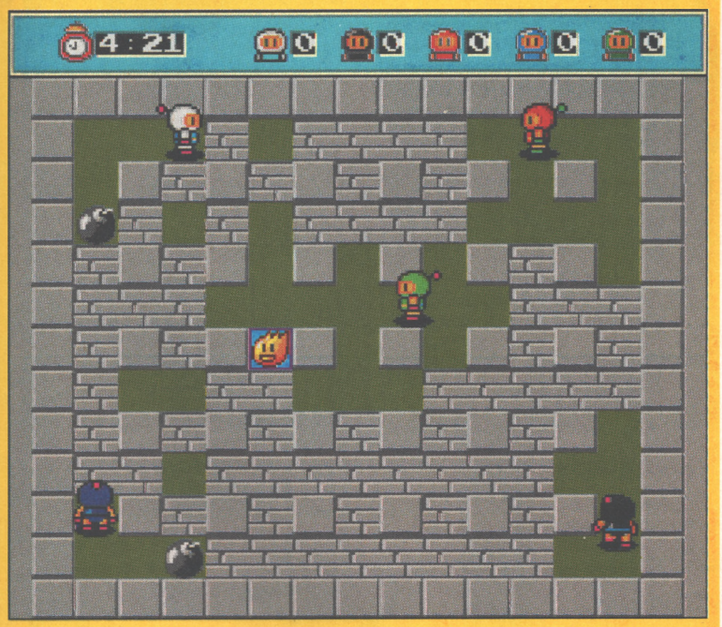
HR Giger meets *Op Wolf* in Ocean's odd-looking arcade licence *Space Gun*.

Oblique title or what? Still, there's nothing I love more than a nice bit of computer simulated violence, especially when it involves several thousand reptile creatures, plenty of power-ups and – yes! – the chance to use the Trojan light phaser. *Space Gun* is not what you'd define as complex. The computer moves your character around (ie side to side, down, up and into the screen) a network of space-station corridors. Several thousand aliens attempt to maim and kill you (the bloodied claw-marks left on the screen are a nice touch), while you simply move a cross-hair around (unless you're using the lightgun, in which casing you're firing purely by aim) taking pot-shots at the aliens, shooting power-ups, and attempting to free hostages.

What does strike me a little odd about this release is that fact that Ocean are about to release *Operation Thunderbolt* on their much cheaper budget label. Which would be alright if *Space Gun* was the better game. It isn't. So:

THRILL as another monster gets →

...an have with a computer. (Or something...)



only do you have the bricks to get rid of, the power-ups to collect and the baddies to kill, you also have four other players to try and bomb out of existence. The game turns into a frantic chase around the screen, with each player desperately trying to collect the best power-ups and lay traps to blow the others to pieces, without (of course) getting himself blown to smithereens in the process. 'Killer mode' is even more exciting, with individual character speed-ups, slow downs and worse making th action more unpredictable than ever.

We've not had so much fun in ages. Excellent fun, and – despite the price – highly recommended.

● *MATT BIELBY*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Expensive but very addictive *PacMan* variant, improved dramatically by the inclusion of a joystick adaptor for five player fun. If you're in the habit of playing games with friends it's a must buy.
83 PERCENT

burned with the flame thrower. CHILL out as the freeze gun is used to make reptile lollipops. SPEW up as the scythe power-up takes the bad guys out limb by limb. SAVE the hostages, or shoot them in a fit of utter evilness. WONDER why the game is so limited. COMPARE it to *Operation Thunderbolt*, and think that maybe it would be a better bet going for the budget option. PONDER on why they decided to convert such an average arcade game in the first place. SLEEP as the gameplay gets just a bit repetitive, despite the end-of-level baddies, and swanky 3D bits. CRY as you try to fill out a review on such a simple game. Phew, I think I made it.

● *MARK RAMSHAW*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Despite being *Line Of Fire* with aliens, *Space Gun* isn't bad. But *Op Thunderbolt* is probably the better game.
69 PERCENT

POWERMONGER: WW1 EDITION

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: £14.99
Author: Bullfrog
Release: Out now

Tally ho! *PowerMonger* goes to war. More realism and violence in the *WWI Edition*.

PowerMonger, eh? Just to refresh you memory – and (er, thumb, thumb) mine – it's (ah, got it) a rather splendid strategy game from Bullfrog that takes *Populous*'s 3D landscape, spruces it up a bit, and adds in lots of little buildings and men running around. And the *WW1 Edition*? *PowerMonger*'s unlikely assortment of islands has been replaced by a proper map of Europe, ripe for invading, and your Captains now sport peaked caps and moustaches. Boats have been swapped for biplanes and tanks, and the rest of the weaponry has been updated accordingly. Oh, and the sheep are now deer. Other than that, it's business as usual.

To be perfectly honest, I'm not sure this represents enough of an advance over *PowerMonger*. True, battles are a lot more exciting, with proper explosions. But the rest is essentially cosmetic. I reckon you'd want to have cash coming out of your ears to lay out for this too.

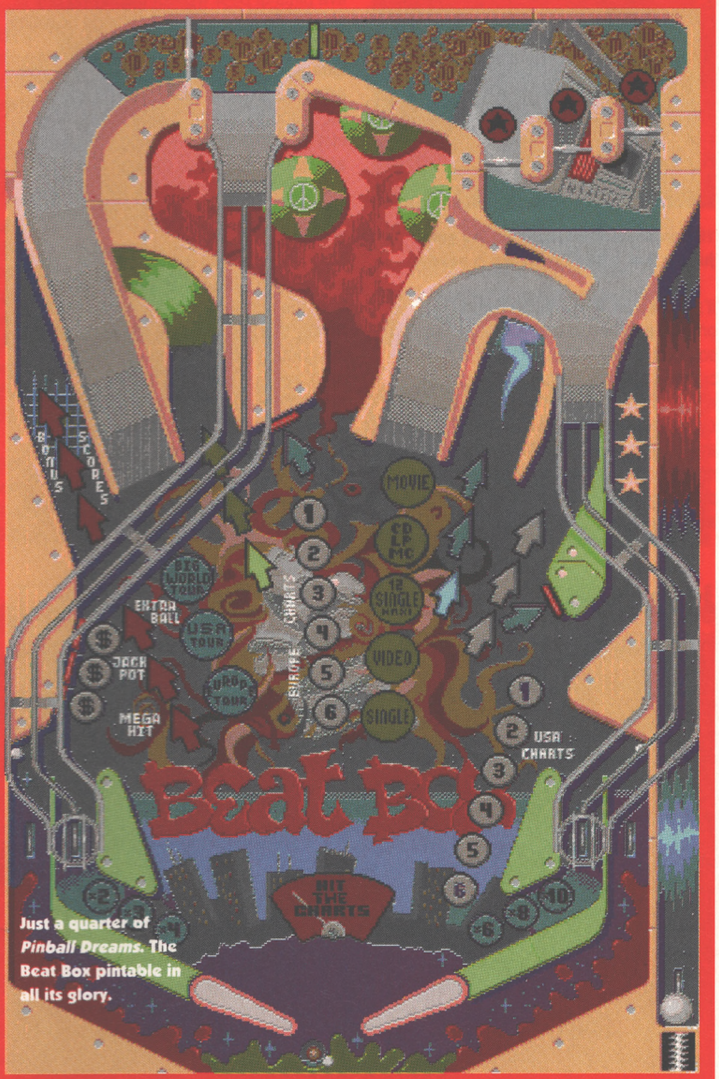
● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A smashing game, but *PowerMonger* always got along fine without it.
65 PERCENT

From out of nowhere comes the definitive pintable sim...

PINBALL DREAMS

Publisher: 21st Century Entertainment
Price: £25.99
Author: Digital Illusions
Release: Out now



Just a quarter of *Pinball Dreams*. The Beat Box pintable in all its glory.

Pinball, eh? Don't you just love it? I certainly do. One of the oldest forms of coin-op entertainment, it's enjoyed something of a resurgence in the last couple of years as arcade kids got bored with the hopelessly hackneyed beat/shoot-'em-ups video game manufacturers have been content to churn out by the thousand since about 1985.

Perhaps surprisingly, this hasn't been reflected in the computer market, with only Activision's *Time Scanner* and *Pinball Magic* (a French game which was more of a pinball-based computer game than a straight pinball reproduction) offering Amiga gamers the chance to play the deaf, dumb and blind kid. Now there's *Pinball Dreams*, which gives you four different scrolling tables to play – A couple of which bear striking similarities to pintables in the arcades at the moment, namely *The Machine* and *T2* – each with its own theme, music, sound effects and layout, and all the great features you'd expect from pinball, like flippers, balls, bumpers, multiple players and, all that kind of stuff. And guess what? It's bloody great.

Now, as a self-confessed pinball lover who spent an entire day playing this solidly when it appeared thus getting no work done whatsoever (and who keeps sneaking back to it when no-one's looking), my gut instinct is to rate this around, ooh, 96 percent or so. That would, however, be a smidgen unrealistic, so let's start off by picking a few pedantic little holes in it.

Firstly, the scrolling table format makes multi-ball play unfeasible (which ball would the scrolling follow?), something which is the crux of most new arcade pins. Secondly, while the four tables you do get are extremely playable, they're not the most imaginative ever designed – lots of things which could have been easily implemented (like plunger skill shots, which practically no arcade pin is without these days) aren't, and it can make the tables a tiny bit repetitive.

And lastly– well, actually, I can't think of anything else. I suppose a construction kit option would have been nice for when you get bored of the four tables supplied, but then you could say that about almost any game – no-one moans about not being able to design new levels for, say, *Formula One Grand Prix*, so it's a bit of an artificial criticism.

There's one other problem, of course. More than a few people around the office have suggested that while this is indeed a lovely game, £26 for a pinball sim is a bit over the top. It's a reasonable complaint, and I'd certainly have preferred to see this nearer the £20 mark, but if you compare the amount of time you'll spend playing this with the amount of playing time you'll get from, say, *The Secret Of Monkey Island* or *Another World* (not that I've got anything against either of those), it doesn't seem like such a bad deal after all. Like Cliff Richard, *Pinball Dreams* is a game which will never really age. But unlike Cliff Richard, it's not totally crap.

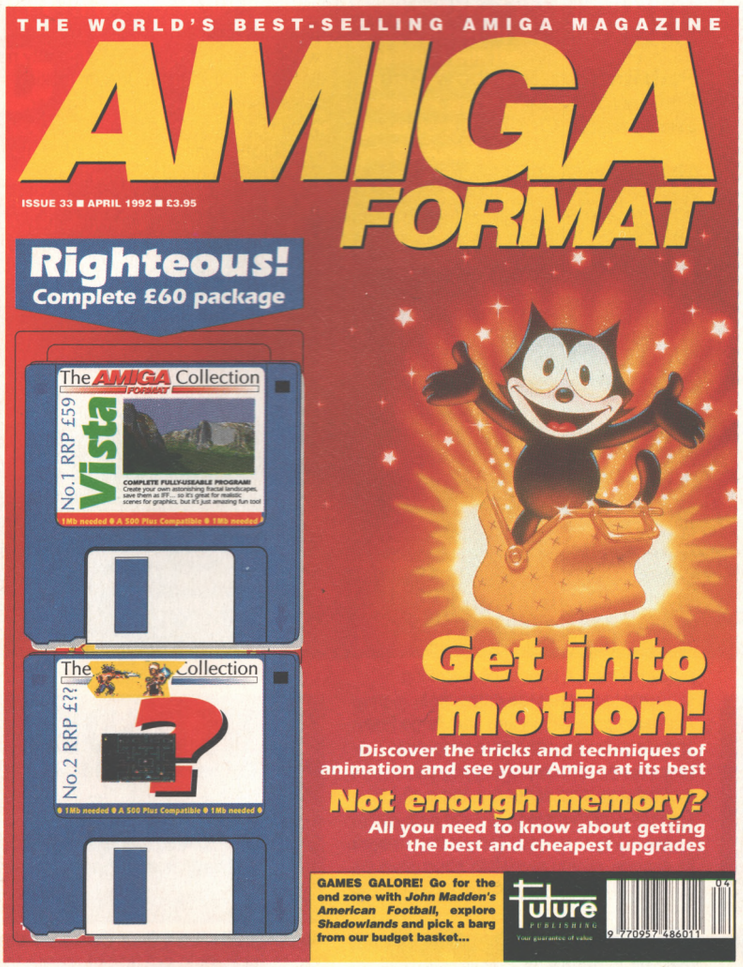
Anyway, that's the objective bit out of the way. What I really want to say is "Ignore all that whinging, *Pinball Dreams* is a beautiful pinball game, closer to the real thing than any other attempt I've seen on any machine, and gorgeously presented with great sonics and some lovely graphical touches, convincing ball movement and more playability than almost anything in the world. Go and buy it at once." So that's what I'll say: Ignore all the whinging, *Pinball Dreams* is a beautiful *(Snip! -Ed)*.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Absolutely top-notch silver ball action, hampered only by a slight lack of imagination in the table design. All the same, you'll play this for years to come, and quite right too.
87 PERCENT

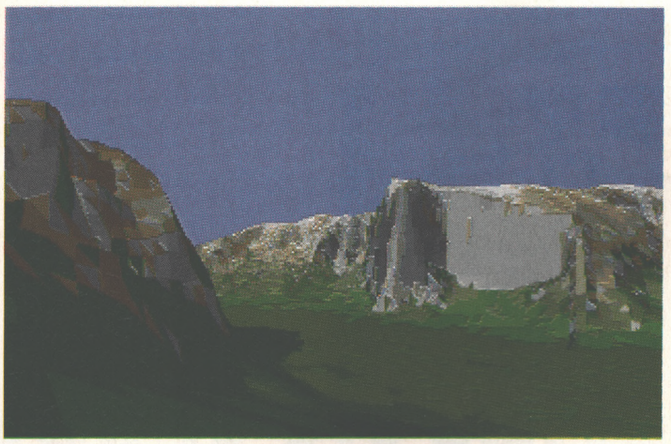
Spring a few surprises!

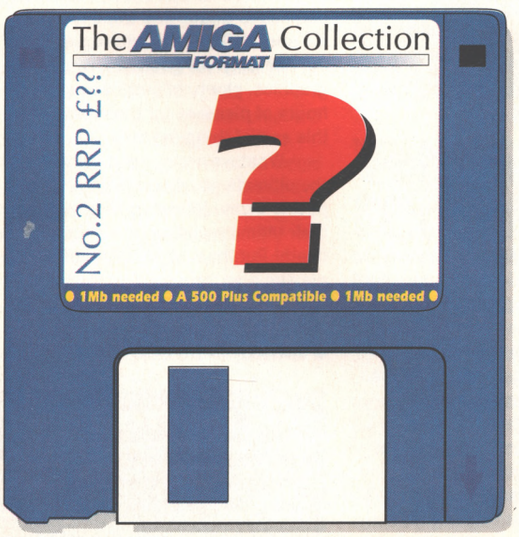
The World's best-selling Amiga magazine is bringing you treat after treat over the coming months, in the form of complete, top-name, full-price programs to help you get more fun and satisfaction out of your Amiga. Don't miss out: look out for them at a newsagent near you!



April - no fooling! out now!

The complete program is Vista, worth £60, one of the most fascinating and enjoyable programs that there is for your Amiga: it allows you to create whole artificial landscapes, for use in graphics or just for fun!





May - top secret! - out 9 April

The Amiga Format Collection of top-name software continues with the second in the series: but we can't yet reveal what it will be! Just make sure to remember to get down to your newsagent on the second Thursday of April, and find out then!

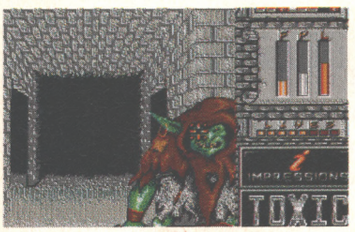
AMIGA FORMAT

BUDGET

It's another choice month for budget buyers. With the re-release of classics *James Pond* and *Super Off Road*, as well as some top original stuff, our extended round-up is choc full of tasty little numbers (and one or two atrocities too).

CHARIOTS OF WRATH

Publisher: Energize
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now



The *Dungeon Master*-as-a-shoot-out section. Don't worry, another sub-game will come along any moment now. That's the beauty of *Chariots Of Wrath*.

Budget game instructions are rarely of encyclopedic proportions, but all this one gave me to go on was a couple of paragraphs of guff about an evil baron and the rather cryptic 'Your chariot is controlled by joystick'. You aren't even wished good luck unless you're French, German, Spanish or Italian. But the job had to be done, so I loaded it up and...

An execrable *Operation Wolf* clone was thrust onto the screen, with monsters appearing one at a time to be shot. Eventually I missed one, died, and...

A *Breakout* game appeared in its place. Not a particularly good one, either, but I persevered and knocked away the bricks nonetheless and...

Surprise surprise, a scrolling shoot-'em-up. Even more surprisingly, it was quite good, with some splendid add-on weapons. Having blown away the end-of-level baddie...

It was back to the bricks. But not for long, for next up was...

The worst level by far: a really awful scrolling platform section. Thankfully this didn't take long either, and was quickly replaced by...

The return of the shoot-'em-up bit, with some marvellous parallax scrolling sea-creatures. It went on a bit, though, and I was just wishing it would go away when...

It did, and an *Asteroids* clone took its place. This didn't look too bad at all, but I died almost immediately, and that was that.

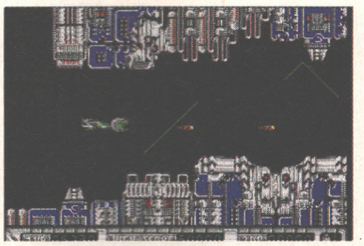
I'm not sure quite what to make of *Chariots of Wrath*. It's rubbish, obviously, but I'd be intrigued to know what comes next...

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A weird hotchpotch of PD-quality subgames. If nothing else, it keeps you guessing.
54 PERCENT

DENARIS

Publisher: Rainbow Arts
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now



***Denaris* – £7.99 for a totally groovy *R-Type* rip-off. A bargain or what?**

I was very surprised to see this one on the shelves of our local software emporium the other day. "But why, Stuart?", I hear you all ask, breathless with curiosity. Well, *Denaris* was originally released a few years back, prior to Activision's official conversion of the classic coin-op blaster *R-Type*, under the title *Katakis*. The problems was, it bore such a striking similarity to that arcade game that Activision promptly kicked up a huge fuss and *Katakis* was withdrawn from sale, reappearing later in a slightly twiddled-around-with form under the name of *Denaris*. Unfortunately, *R-Type* had appeared by then and *Denaris* had missed its chance, sliding away into obscurity.

Still, that doesn't mean it was a bad game, and this re-release is a welcome second chance to play what's a pretty nifty blaster in its own right. Despite looking very much like its coin-op big brother, *Denaris* is actually a noticeably less sophisticated game, replacing most of *R-Type*'s more innovative touches with simple high-speed blasting. This makes it less involved but more exciting, and while there are several flaws (you get too many lives and it's a bit easy at the start, to name a couple), this is still a fast, noisy, violent, entertaining and enjoyable shoot-'em-up that deserves a prominent place in your budget game collection.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Don't expect anything quite as sublimely imaginative or groundbreaking as *R-Type*, but do expect a groovy alien-slaughtering experience that's looking very well for its age. Good fun.
79 PERCENT

RENEGADE

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

"Review *Renegade*!" roared rumbustious rogue Ramshaw. Rotter. "Rough up razor-

BLINKY'S SCARY SCHOOL

Spectrum days are here again – *Blinky* offers big, bold colours and joyously simple gameplay. *Blinky's Scary School* is spooky stuff indeed.

Publisher: Zeppelin
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Once upon a time the Codies used to churn out 'simulator' games by the barrow-load and, despite some heavy flak, made lots of money from them. But then everyone else started doing 'simulator' games, and kind of spoiled it a bit, so the Codies turned their attentions instead to 'lovable character' games – *Dizzy*, *Seymour*, *Little Puff* and all the rest of them. But then, er...

Here's Blinky, Zeppelin's very own 'lovable character'. He's a ghost with big eyes and outsized boots who's a bit crap at jumping, and won't drop an object unless he can pick another one up at the same time, but otherwise fits the role perfectly. And, true to form, he's got lots of rooms to wander around with puzzles to solve, baddies to dodge and traps to avoid. It's sort of *Dizzy*, but with a garnish of *Jet Set Willy*. All good fun, with smart graphics, plenty of surprises and hours of pleasure for those who enjoy this sort of thing (eg me).

What we really, want, however, is the ultimate 'lovable character' game, pitting *Dizzy*, *Blinky* and the rest in their ultimate challenge – a fight to the death! Put them all in a *Speedball II* playing area, arm them to the teeth and see who comes out on top. It would be brilliant. *(Nurse! – Ed)*

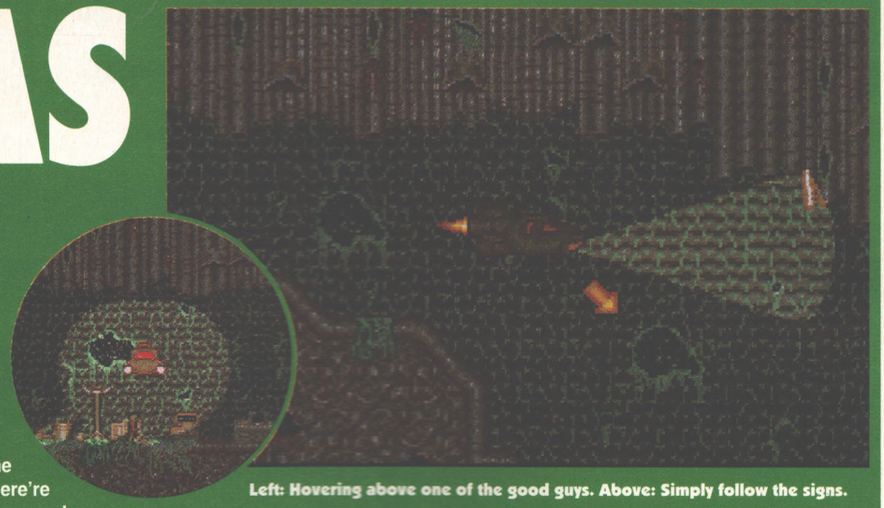
● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Just what budget games are all about (or supposed to be): simple, harmless fun (with good graphics).
71 PERCENT

CAVITAS

Publisher: Nite Time Games
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Did I ever tell you how much I used to love my Spectrum? There was no end to the classic arcade adventures available for it – the stylish *Sabre Wulf*, the gigantic *Nodes Of Yesod* (no, really!) and of course the seminal *Starquake*. Nite Time have obviously taken their cue from the classics of yesteryear, 'cos *Cavitas* is one hell of an exploration and shooting fest. The basic idea is simple enough – you guide a hefty craft round mazes of caverns, populated with the inevitable array of monsters and their generators. Most areas are blocked by steel doors, which require the correct key to open. There're also computers littered around the places, and... hell, you don't really want to know any of this.



Left: Hovering above one of the good guys. Above: Simply follow the signs.

Shedding a little light on the subject – the player's craft actually throws a beam of light in *Cavitas*. This large face thing in the back wall is actually an alien generator, a la *Gauntlet*.

Okay, okay, so the game doesn't really match up to the old classics, but it still offers some brilliantly structured mazes, loads of power-ups and hordes of meanies to blast. It's also, to my knowledge, the first one meg only budget release. (The extra memory is used for some pretty sexy presentation effects. Between games, for instance, there're some fetching HAM screens which slide on and off.) The game, too, uses 64 colour mode, and features a neat lighting effect. The headlights from the player's craft actually throw a beam onto the surrounding rock formations, baddies and background details.

It's all groovy stuff, and if the ship movement feels just a bit too leaden (some gravity wouldn't go amiss), and the baddies aren't really that spectacular, then I guess I can bring myself to forgive it. Go on, treat yourself.

● *MARK RAMSHAW*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A surprisingly slick one meg only arcade adventure, done the old fashioned way. Fab, groovy, and just a little bit bodacious.

80 PERCENT

Rather ridiculous *Renegade* – really rather rank, rotten, and repugnant. Revolutionary reading right here, all right.

wielding riff-raff ruthlessly in a reprehensible rampage of retribution!" Right. *Renegade* reveals rugged recidivists in a rowdy but routine rumpus, riddled with ropey renderings of rabble-rupturing rucks. Really, a rhinoceros would retch at the retarded ramblings revealed in this rotten re-release, in which rheumatoid reprobates with rigor mortis are rudely routed with a rock-bottom repertoire of rabbit-punches and ruffian-rattling kicks. The whole ridiculous rigmarole, I reckon, will be responsible for repeated riots in retailers, as ripped-off wretches rebel against being robbed of readies for such rancid rubbish, and return this remarkably repugnant refuse rapidly. *Renegade* was once a redoubtable, refulgent, rip-roaring, rave of a game, but this ragged resurrection reverberates with rampant regression. I regret requiring to reluctantly request that you reduce this reckless replica to rubble, but its relegation to a remote region of Rekjavik would be a rescue from real rancour for all concerned. You can call me a reactionary runt, but I'd reply that *Renegade* rankles, and revenge, retribution and resentful reprisals from rectitudinal rascals would relentlessly regale me were I to resort to rating it with anything but a reviling raspberry. Respect.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
I repeat, *Renegade* is rancid, revolting, repellent rot. RIP. *(You're redundant – Ed)*

16 PERCENT

VENUS: THE FLYTRAP

Publisher GBH
Price £7.99
Release Out now

Sorry, fly fans, but *Venus: The Flytrap* can't be used to capture bluebottles. Or your imagination really, come to think of it. Beneath the tiresome ecologically-sound storyline about the decay of the planet (which is related in words and pictures by way of a simple scene-setting sequence) and fairly nifty graphics is a tired and detested platform piece.

Let's be fair though. In look, at any rate, it's undeniably unusual. The player controls a mechanical fly – but one which can't (fly, that is) without the aid of a power up. It can, however, walk along platforms, leap short distances and shoot bullets without too much trouble.

"Come and buy another average platform game", said the spider to the fly. *(Eh? – Ed)*

The fly has to negotiate 10 sideways scrolling platform arrangements – each one visually different and split into zones – which sounds interesting but unfortunately turns out to be a very linear slog of simple walking, jumping and shooting actions. There are no surprises (well, apart from finding out that it's possible to get trapped until the timer runs out, ho ho) but plenty of annoyances – one of them is profusion of pointless features, including the old picking-up-something-which-temporarily-reverses-the-joystick-movements chestnut. The creatures in *Venus*' world are so bland they don't do much more than trundle back and forth or bounce up and down in tedious little preset patterns, while the bonus pods they leave behind when shot reveal an equally uninspired collection of features, more often than not score, energy or timer bonuses. How Marvellous.

Special blocks built into the scenery affect the fly and its mission too. There are blocks that rapidly reduce the time limit while you stand on them, blocks to make the fly jump higher (which is the same as making the platforms lower, so why bother?) and blocks that are bouncy or sticky (fair enough). Oh, and there's a bonus level in the form of a simple shoot-'em-up.

Dullish stuff, then, even at this price, but it does look quite nice.

● *GARY PENN*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Anyone who's interested in simple, repetitive platform action is on to a winner here – there's loads of it, and it's cheap.

39 PERCENT

EDD THE DUCK

Publisher: Zeppelin
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

***Edd the Duck* – a bit of a half-hearted attempt to reproduce the stunning gameplay of *Rainbow Islands*. And anyway, nine out 10 AMIGA POWER reviewers prefer Gordon the Gopher.**

I suppose it's surprising that there haven't been more attempts to clone *Rainbow Islands*. Then again, as the best Amiga game of all time (official), I guess trying to improve on it is a task which would be beyond your average game designer. Certainly the recent *Top Banana* doesn't even give the mustard a nasty graze, far less a cut, but this earlier clone effort is even worse – coupling *Banana*'s limited gameplay with a tacky cartoon tie-in and suffering badly for it.

Edd's task is to jump and zap his way to the top of several TV studios, collecting stars for some deeply important reason or other (which the manual doesn't even bother to explain, motivation fans).

Edd comes armed with snowballs which freeze the various baddies and allow him to pass them, but he must be quick or they'll thaw out again. While *Rainbow* was notable for its gorgeously flexible control, *Edd The Duck* doesn't even allow you to move your character in mid-jump. This gives things an uncomfortable, artificial feel which spoils what could still have been a semi-respectable arcade game, and makes progress a real chore.

When you finally do reach the end of a screen, the next one's exactly the same but harder (and it's a frustratingly hard game to start with, so bye-bye all those young Edd fans who might otherwise have enjoyed the game), and frankly if you've got the will to persevere past the third level or so then you win my personal award for dedication above and beyond the call of duty. But no points at all for your taste.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Tragic point-missing would-be *Rainbow Islands* rip-off that's one of the most primitive attempts at a platform game we've seen. In the month that *Rainbow Islands* comes out at the same price, it shouldn't take an Einstein to work out what to buy.

35 PERCENT

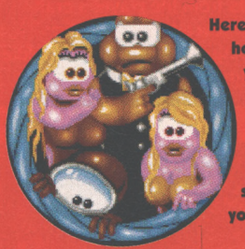
JAMES POND

Publisher: GBH
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

You are the 'Fish with the Golden Key'! (Another secret agent fish joke sinks without trace.) James attempts to free the lobsters, before the diver poaches them.

I like a bit of fishing, so playing a fishy secret agent out to foil evil fishermen like myself provides an interesting bit of role reversal. *James Pond*, the prequel to this year's ultra-successful *Robocod*, is the first adventure of Amigadom's premier fishy secret agent and as such probably isn't much of a mystery to anyone – check out this month's Amiga Universe if you're completely clueless. That being the case I'll just give the briefest of plot basics before we get onto how good it is: *Pond* is an underwater agent on a series of missions to save innocent sea creatures from nasty lobster fishermen, evil oil companies and the like. See, told you it'd be brief.

And how good is it? Well, in a word, very. It's certainly colourful and cute and packed with character. This is very much an eight-bit console type of game, which isn't to knock it at all. Scrolling, graphics and so on may not be up to Psygnosis standards, but that's hardly the point – funny (if groanworthy) and inventive details, an abundance of sub-levels (arf, arf), appealing characters and well-structured collect-objects-shoot-baddies-and-free-captured-creatures gameplay is the order of the day here, and makes for a very appealing £8-worth.



Here James, how come your such a hit with the girls? Learn to swim, young man.

In fact, my only problem with it would be that much of it is perhaps a tad too easy for most of us – though in its defence it's probably just aimed at the younger gameplayer. In the first level you are set the task of setting free trapped lobsters before wicked divers take them to the surface or hostile sea-creatures kill you, and while most experienced games players will breeze through it, they'll have fun while they do so.

Later sections get tougher, but this isn't the sort of game you're ever likely to get completely stuck on – as the game progresses missions tend to become longer rather than more intense.

Still, it's a joy to play, and eight squid (sorry) is a mere drop in the ocean as far as good games are concerned, after all. Even after I've finished every level, it's a game I'll come back to again and again.

● *MATTHEW SQUIRES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Colourful, ingenious, humourous, easy to play – *Pond* is a lorra lafs, and even in a month of great budget re-releases a clear stand-out game. If we had to give it a grade, it would certainly be well above 'C' level.

83 PERCENT

TORNADO GROUND ATTACK

Publisher: Energize
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Lookout *Sonic*, here comes *Tornado Ground Attack*. (Are you sure? – Ed)

'Attack the enemy HQ four miles from your base,' advises your mission briefing. So, that's range four miles, bearing, um... oh dear. No bearing. That's because the only direction you'll be flying in is from left to right, over a scrolling landscape.

So, as tortured, misshapen scenery crawled before my eyes, I searched the packaging twice to check that this was, indeed, the 'wicked shoot-em-up' it promised. Perhaps there'd been some mistake. But, no, it all seemed to add up. That pointed, silver thing must be my 'Tornado aircraft', and those other pointed things coming at it, the 'enemy planes'. And the weedy blobs that emerge shamefacedly from the front of my 'Tornado aircraft' when I press fire? They can only be the 'loads of mean weapons'. My joystick fell from my hand, and I wept silently as I reached for the off switch.

I know it's easy to mock shoddy budget games, but *Tornado Ground Attack* might as well have a sign sellotaped to its bottom saying 'Kick Me'. In fact, it has. I stuck one on and left it in the corner of the office, and when I came back ten minutes later there were shards of plastic all over the floor. Very poor indeed.

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Sit down and write a computer game. (Even if you've never written one before in your life.) It'll be better than this.

23 PERCENT

COMBO RACER

Publisher: GBH
Price: £7.99
Release Out now

Combo Racer – complete rubbish, simply.

For those who don't know what a 'Combo Racer' is it's a 'Combination Racer' – the combination of man and machine and, erm, another man in 'perfect harmony.' One driving the fragile motorbike-and-sidecar 'combination' at scarily high speeds, the other helping balance it

around tight corner after tight corner.

Most of us will never be able to try it for real, but wouldn't it be brilliant, right, if you could sit at home and pretend you were doing it on your Amiga. Imagine, right, you could have a two-player thing, right, where one of you drives the bike and the other one does all the leaning. And you could have it almost realistic, right, so that when you crash or scrape the tunnel walls you get damaged. And that damage could affect the engine and so it'd be harder to win.

Yeah, right, and you could have some options, like changing the number of laps and a practice bit. And you could have proper racing seasons as well – with a disk save and a points table. Ah, and better still, right, could have a track editor, right, so you could do your own tracks. Wow. It'd be a bit like putting together a Scalextric set only it'd be easier to put away. Ah, it'd be brilliant.

And I'm sure it would – if it felt as though you were racing around a track in the first place, and not sitting in front of your computer screen watching some rather crude graphics go through their sorry paces. *Combo Racer* simply isn't thrilling or convincing enough. Buy a die-cast model of a suitable bike and use your nose to push it around your living room floor instead.

● *GARY PENN*

THE BOTTOM LINE
An adequate simulation of the sport – in all ways except the playability stakes. Unfortunately *Combo Racer*'s on a road to nowhere.

21 PERCENT

IVAN 'IRON MAN' STEWART'S SUPER OFF ROAD

Rather more complex gameplay than *Indy Heat* – and a whole lot cheaper, to boot.

Publisher: Virgin
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Roundy-roundy *Super Sprint*-type games have a real problem, I find – they almost invariably fail to work for long as anything other than a two player game, and even then have a very limited appeal. There are plenty of reasons for this, of course – the way the small, toy-like graphics fail to drag you into emotional involvement, the fact that each level is essentially the same as the last – but the most important thing is the very one-dimensional nature of the constantly looping gameplay. Multi-player games mean you can bash into human opponents to your heart's content, but even then there's too little variation.

That said though, the game we're dealing with here is the undisputed king of *Super Sprint*-style games, and as such is worth a place in anybody's heart. It features little Tonka-type trucks zooming at commendable speed around a series of off-road courses, the realistic truck movement painstakingly mapped by arch-perfectionists Graftgold. Though there are only eight tracks it's fairly tough – only the very best players will ever see the end of the game. If you like Scalextric sets you'll like this, basically – what was very limited, if well executed, fare at £25 becomes ideal budget material at under a tenner, and certainly makes Code Masters pretenders (let alone *Indy Heat*!) look fairly sad. Perhaps not quite a must-buy for everyone, but certainly one of the most attractive budget re-releases of the month.

● *MATT BIELBY*

THE BOTTOM LINE
As good as *Super Sprint* racers get – not for everyone, but if you like the game style, this is the one to get.

83 PERCENT

AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACH
on the Amiga (1 Meg only)

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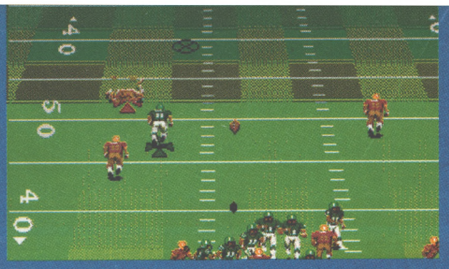

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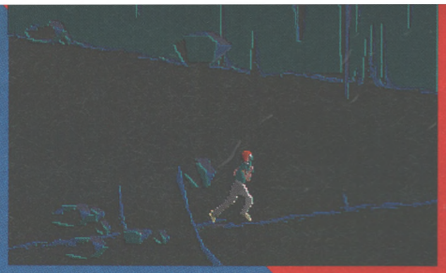

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PD

Could this be the real start of the PD revolution? This month sees the release of possibly the best PD ever to grace the Amiga – stuff that's been played in the AP office just as much as the full price games! Master of ceremonies is, as ever, our very own Stuart Campbell.

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

Well, here we are with two pages again, and it's just as well because this month sees us with some of the finest PD released since I started doing the column eight months ago (or whenever it actually was). *Skaermtrolden Hugo* and *Solidquad* are both truly excellent pieces of software (both remarkable for their stunning into-the-screen 3D, coincidentally enough), and the fact that they'll cost you only pennies just goes to make them even more extraordinary. Make no mistake, there have been hundreds of games less entertaining than these released at £25, so miss them only if you're completely off your trolley. But there's more to this month too – how about a *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit* tribute to one of our favourite coin-ops ever, a game once released as a professional product, or a highly original effort featuring a bull with a mission to completely destroy a china shop? Whatever your taste, it's all here...

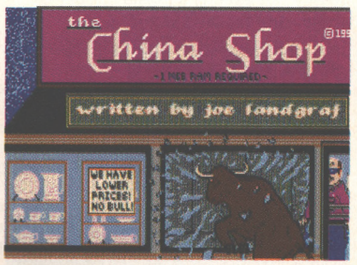
CARD SHARP
(Start, disk 1518)

Hmm. I sense a short review coming on. *Card Sharp* is a neat little program which collects together four well-known patience games. They're all prettily depicted on screen and come complete with instructions (although the instructions aren't always a great help), but otherwise the frills are kept to a minimum (no sound, no move retraction, for example). If you can get past the basic concept of wanting to play patience on a computer instead of with a 50p pack of cards in the first place, *Card Sharp* performs its task perfectly adequately, but personally I prefer the tactile feel and cheating potential of the real thing. Still, er, if you haven't got a table (or something), this'll do you fine.

Er, it's a picture of someone playing computer patience. Um... (I give up)

VERDICT: Patience on a computer? It kind of ranks up there (but not quite) with fruit machine games, doesn't it? Fine for what it is, but that's not much. ★★

BULL IN A CHINA SHOP
(Start, disk 1526)



Er, yes, it is a nice title screen, isn't it? No Lisa, we can't use your 'horny' joke here...

Oh God, not another one. I'm so completely sick of games where you have to control a bull rampaging through a china shop trying to destroy as much of the stock as possible while avoiding spinning blades and pools of flame on the floor, and dodging missiles and hand-grenades →

SKAERMTROLDEN HUGO
(Virus Free)

What's going on? Possibly the most impressive 3D graphics I've seen since AMIGA POWER began, and they're on a Scandinavian PD game! *Skaermtrolden Hugo* (any chance of coming up with a translated version sometime, someone?) is a simple little game on three disks, with a plot which I'm unfortunately unable to relate to you, on account of my not being fluent in Danish, Swedish or Norwegian or whatever language the lengthy text preceding the game is written in, but what you don't need to be able to read to see is the astounding animation as our hero (and he is our hero, being one of the most instantly lovable characters you've ever seen) runs through subterranean tunnels in search of gold, while trying not to be blown to pieces by dynamite or knocked over by runaway mine trucks. If he escapes from the mine network intact, there's a rickety bridge full of holes to cross, then a set of doors to negotiate before the end is reached. To be honest, that won't take you forever even on the harder of the game's two difficulty settings, but it's unfeasibly gripping stuff in the meantime, and young kiddies will be especially enthralled (if they're patient enough to put up with long disk accesses at a few certain junction points, that is).

Don't hang around deciding where you want to go – Hugo gets bored easily and taps on the screen to complain..!

Hugo looks gormlessly back at you as he boldly heads off into the unknown.

As Hugo runs down another corridor, dynamite goes off on all sides. He might look a bit scorched, but that's just for effect – keep on running and you won't come to any harm. Well, not much, anyway...

The bridge section – watch out for the Road Runner-type bit if you fall down.

The presentation of the whole thing is absolutely gorgeous, and a few jokey little interludes prove that humour is indeed international. You even get a sweetly appaling Euro-crap pop ditty at the start to get you right into the mood, and that's the final piece in the jigsaw which makes this the most all-round impressive bit of PD we've ever seen. Just this once, we'll forgive shallow gameplay, and unreservedly recommend that you get this without delay.

VERDICT: Technically amazing, with very simplistic but still addictive gameplay, and cuter than you'd believe. Never mind *Space Ace* et al, this is how to really show off what your Amiga can do. ★★★★★

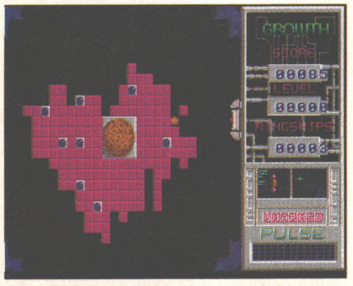
thrown from windows by the shop's angry proprietor, you wouldn't believe it.

They all seem to have the same crude but lovable graphics, charmingly ridiculous sound effects and idiotically simplistic gameplay, and every single one would appear to be lots of fun for five minutes mental relaxation or as a great way to keep younger players happy for an hour or two, if not entirely likely to damage sales of *Populous 2* too severely. This takes years to load and it needs one meg of memory for reasons which are completely beyond me, but er, if you're a fan of the bull-in-china-shop genre, this'll go down a real treat.

VERDICT: Well, it's not a load of bull, but it's not exactly a prime cut of PD either. One for the kiddies. ★★★

GROWTH

(Software Expressions, disk G153)



Professional software in the Public Domain – how long till *F1 GP* goes the same way?

I'm sure I remember this as one of the first-ever budget games on the Amiga, released in about 1989 at £15. It's an odd game, like nothing so much as the mindbogglingly obscure coin-op *Space Zap* in concept. You control an *Arkanoid*-style bat which circles around the outer edge of the screen, shooting bullets at a huge throbbing mass of plasma which grows (hence the title) outwards from the centre. In the middle of it is a nasty alien being of some description, and your objective is to blast a path through the icky stuff and kill the alien before any of the goo reaches the edge of the screen. (If this happens, the alien gets to zap you with a laser beam). Later levels up the difficulty by also including one or more alien ships which bounce around and are also deadly to the touch, or break up the action with one of two sub-games.

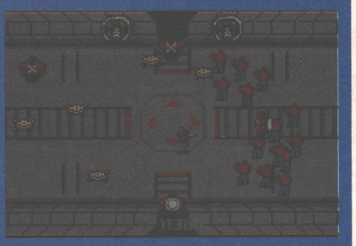
In one, you simply have to shoot bubbles which descend from the top of the screen without letting any of them reach the bottom, a task which would be easy if it wasn't for the fact that your controls are reversed, and in the other one you have to blast away every single square of a non-expanding growth while simultaneously keeping an *Arkanoid*-style ball bouncing around and preventing it from hitting the edges. It's all jolly good fun, with only two drawbacks. Firstly, the mouse control is a bit jittery, making it hard to exert any really precise control over your 'bat', and secondly it's ridiculously easy until around the 20th level, when the repetitive nature of the gameplay is making you think about giving up anyway. Still, decent enough fun, and a pretty original idea, so well worth a go all the same.

VERDICT: Novel arcade game with loads of potential which perhaps isn't fully realised here, but it's still interesting. ★★★

SMASH TELLY

(Jolyon Oberman)

You can do your Sid Vicious impersonation in this bit – get right into the crowd and let 'em have it...



You might be smarter than them, but they've got you outnumbered in a pretty serious way. Zap those zombies!

Total rip-offs! We love 'em! This *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit* blaster is, as you might suspect, a 'tribute' to Williams' supremely lovely arcade machine – the very same one that Ocean recently released such a so-so conversion of.

As you might also suspect, the *SEUCK* origins of the game mean it's not exactly a perfect clone of the coin-op, but what you get is a seriously tough zapping challenge (for one or two players simultaneously, even) which includes, after a fashion, all your favourite characters from the original game. Mr Shrapnel, Mutoid Man, the Cobra Twins and all the rest put in an appearance here, and while it's all totally unsophisticated stuff (the baddies for the most part simply glide across the screen zombie-style and only kill you if they collide with you, with none of that clever chasing-around routine), it's undeniably charming at the same time. It's got a few nice little touches of its own too (the way the bad guys don't disappear when you shoot them, crashing dead to the floor in a pool of blood and staying there), and if the collision detection's a bit on the dodgy side, well, who cares? This takes the heart and soul of the coin-op and sticks them onto the screen with the minimum of fuss or dressing-up, and it's the kind of thing we'd like to see more of in the Public Domain. I hope young Jolyon's postman knows what Jolyon's just let him in for...

VERDICT: What can we say? If you're a fan of the coin-op (or, indeed, just like shoot-'em-ups) this has to be a real must-get. A sweet one. ★★★★★

SOLIDQUAD

(17 Bit, disk 1587)

One thing the Public Domain isn't unduly blessed with is driver's-view racing games. In fact, off the top of my head I can't think of a single one, which makes this all the more astonishing. *Solidquad* (there's an interesting story behind the title, programming fans, but I won't relate it here – it's on the game's doc file, so you'll just have to go and get a copy) is a strange driving spectacular, putting you at the wheel of a motorbike (I think) which you have to ride along four spooky country roads. Each one is littered with pits, puddles, road cones, trees and various other obstacles, as well as lots of eerie-looking scarecrows. Your objective is to reach the end of each course, where there lurks an end-of-level meanie who you have to kill, without crashing or burning to death. You avoid this by (and here's where we depart from reality completely) dropping ramps from your bike to jump over obstacles, or alternatively using the ramps as shields to protect you from collisions. Of course, your ramp supply is limited, but fortunately you can collect more by colliding with the scarecrows. You also carry 'puddles' with you, which you can use to put out fires on your bike (if there aren't any handy streams to drive through). What a load of old nonsense.

Luckily, though, at AMIGA POWER we don't mark things according to plot alone, so *Solidquad* manages to triumph purely on the strength of being a very fast and enormously addictive racer with big, characterful graphics and real joystick-gripping thrills aplenty. It isn't the smoothest thing in the world, but it's the game everyone in the office has been sneaking a quick go on, and it'll probably take you longer to finish than *Lotus Turbo Challenge 2* to boot...

This is actually the game's hardest level, as you might deduce from the narrow manouevring space. Mind those trunks!

The middle level is a bit less cluttered, but that doesn't mean it's easy. Well, none of us can get near the end anyway.

And here's the nice, restful level one. This one's as easy as, er, playing the saxophone and eating at the same time.

VERDICT: Superb adrenalin-pumping racer that looks and plays like nothing else. Do yourself a favour and try it out as soon as possible. ★★★★★

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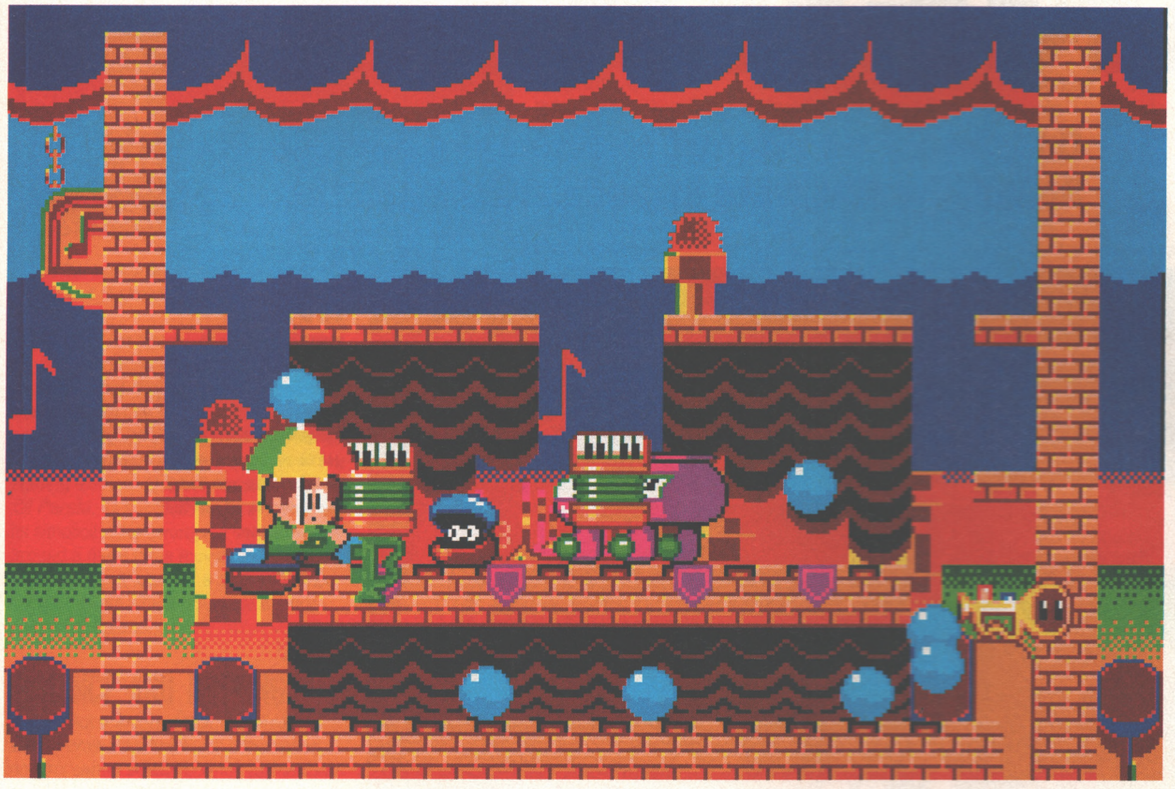


*Oh, alright then, a trip to Ocean Software's offices for a day.

Just some of the happy smiling faces you'll meet in the bowels of Ocean Software when you visit Manchester's very own hit factory...

You – yes, you! – could be the lucky reader who wins an all-expenses-paid trip to the offices of world famous Ocean Software as a guest of Ocean and the AMIGA POWER team. That's the treat, but, of course, it's not all you stand to win. No, the wonderful people at Ocean have *also* promised to send the winner every new Ocean game of 1992(!) the minute it becomes available! We reckon that's, er, quite a lot of titles, including biggies like *Epic*, *Hook*, *Wizkid*, *Sim Ant*, and of course *Parasol Stars* itself. It's simply not to be missed!

And that's not all! Mention of *Parasol Stars* brings us rather weakly to the runner's up prizes. "Runner's up prizes?" you shriek? Oh, yes! Ten – count 'em – blessed readers will win their very own yumlicious copy of *Parasol Stars*, the top sequel to *Rainbow Islands* and *Bubble Bobble*.

WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR

Are you ready to sacrifice self respect in the name of art? Good, 'cos this is what we want you to do. Simply dress up to look as much like Bub (or Bob) as possible, and take a photo of yourself (Polaroids or – for the brave – photo booths are fine) in the ridiculous attire. Remember, you can choose to go for the dragon or (much easier) human incarnations. The most accurate, silliest or most genuinely pathetic entry wins!

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Once you've got your photo, then send it to us at: I'm Too Sexy For My Dungarees, AMIGA POWER, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW. Oh yes, and we'd advise you to change out of that stupid costume before visiting your nearest post box...

RULES AND REGULATIONS

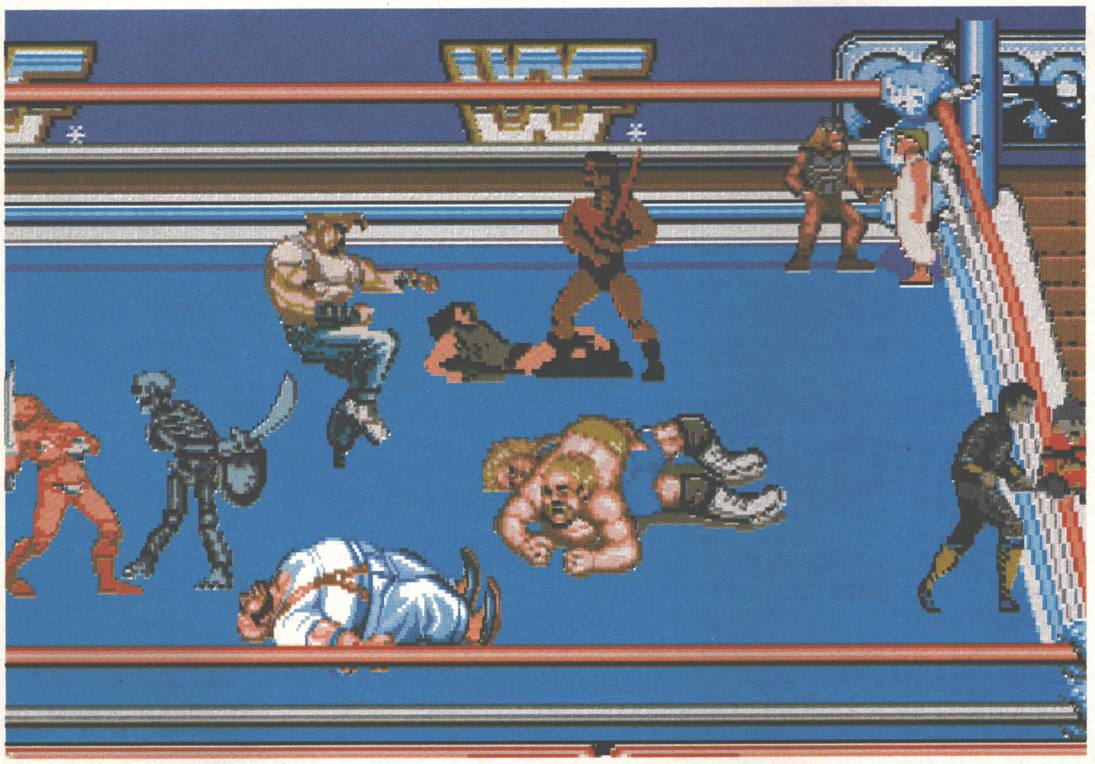
- Remember, the closing date for the competition is April 30th, 1992.
- The editor's decision is final. (And no, you can't have your photos back!)
- Employees of Future and Ocean aren't eligible to enter. (Assuming they'd be brave enough to dare!)
- We reserve the right to laugh, giggle, guffaw and cry over all entries.

COMPETITI

DEFINITION OF sound

THE BEATEN GENERATION

Once again we attempt to define the divine in Definition Of Sound, the last word in guides to eggs in the same basket.



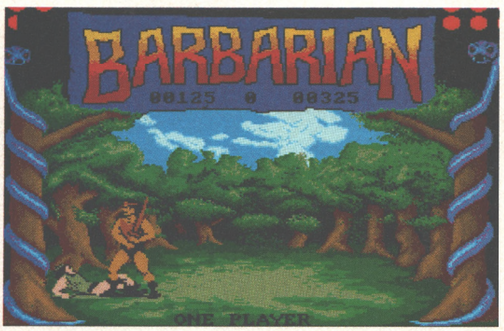
The entire Amiga beat-'em-up world battles it out in the *WWF* wrestling ring. Barbarians, ninjas, fat men and skeletons are just some of the unlikely characters you get to meet and, erm, kick in when you enter the universe of martial arts violence.

The beat-'em-up has become a perennial computer game favourite ever since Data East's arcade smash *Karate Champ* hit the scene in 1984. That particular bout of martial arts action saw the pyjama-clad player scrapping with increasingly talented like-dressed assailants (or a human opponent). Between the bouts there were alternative tests of skill to endure, such as fending off attacks from flying crockery and bashing bulls' brains out with a single punch. (Sounds similar to most modern beat-'em-ups, eh? You don't know how right you are...)

***Karate Champ* was a most enjoyable dual-joystick affair (through which a multitude of kicks and punches were executed), but it wasn't long before the one-on-one combat format was kicked up the ass and the basic premise taken a stage further...**

Enter Thomas, the star of Data East's *Kung-Fu Master*. His repertoire of moves was smaller than the *Karate Champ* fighter's, but this was compensated for by the inclusion of a storyline and horizontally scrolling levels.

Karate Champ and *Kung-Fu Master* spawned many imitators, but few of their contemporaries have provided quite the same innocence-inspired thrills. Surprisingly, the beat-'em-up hasn't changed a great deal since its inception. At least, it hasn't in the arcades. The home computer systems have seen some progression in this department with 'original' titles in which the fighting is



(Top) *Barbarian* the Psygnosis way – a bit on the plodding side – and (bottom) the Palace gorefest of the same name.

integral but not foremost (such as Psygnosis' boring ***Barbarian***s and *System 3*'s lousy ***Last Ninja*** series). These aren't true beat-'em-ups though, and so won't be covered here. (Well, with the exception of a special mention to the strong sword-fighting element of Broderbund's ***Prince Of Persia***. Its success is mainly down to its simplicity: the swordplay centres around a mere three moves, but it's possible to put together a slick sequence of movements which would have made Errol Flynn proud.)

VIOLENCE AND NOTHING BUT

But enough of that. This feature draws the line here: if the action doesn't centre solely around rucking then it doesn't count. So without further ado, let's kick it. Our lengthy journey through the genre begins with the gamestyle in its simplest form – the straight scraps. You know the sort of thing: two or more combatants slap heads against a simple non-interactive backdrop.

Although *Karate Champ* has never been converted to the Amiga, it does exist in the similar but superior form of Archer Maclean's ***IK+*** (released by System 3). *IK+*'s innovation was the head-to-head-to-head action – three pyjama-clad combatants, one of whom is always computer-controlled, beat the living daylights out of each other against an otherwise serene sunset scene. The combat takes a backseat every third round when the player participates in one of two fun-filled tests of endurance: deflecting bouncing balls with a dustbin lid and kicking (or avoiding) short-fused bombs. *IK+* is almost four years old and yet it still knocks all comers for six. It has some cracking moves (such as an acrobatic flip-flop, a dangerous double head kick and a painful head-butt) and a far-out fighting feel.

FIGHTING FROM THE SILVER SCREEN

Another even earlier effort in this department came from veteran programmer Steve Bak, who brought the smash hit film ***Karate Kid II*** to life for Microdeal. *Karate Kid II*'s traditional joystick shaft wrestling against tougher and tougher fighters was interspersed with amusing (and welcome) breaks in the form of simple hand-eye coordination tests (controlling a full-screen close-up animated picture of the Kid's mentor, Mr Miyagi, and trying to catch a fly with a pair of chopsticks being the most memorable). It was commendable (and quite playable for that matter) – especially when you consider that the film was such a complete dog in the first place – but by no means mould-breaking.

KEEPING ABREAST OF ITS PEERS

Steve Brown looked to the silver screen for inspiration too, and found Arnold Schwarzenegger's Conan to create ***Barbarian*** for Palace Software. Here the combatants fought, primarily at least, not with their fists and feet but with swords. *Barbarian* was close to realising the potential of the subject (its spot-on sound effects, Web Of Death sword-spinning-and-decapitation sequence still manage to raise a smile), but left a lot to be desired with its sluggish control and staccato combat. Palace then took *Barbarian* along the *Kung-Fu Master* route with its more adventure-orientated sequel, ***Barbarian 2 – The Dungeons Of Drax***. They failed – running around Drax's dungeons, hacking and slashing weird creatures during a search for special items and ultimately the exit proved terribly tedious. *Barbarian II*'s only redeeming features were an impressive array of sounds, the large giggling skeleton which invited you to "INSERT DISK TWO!" and (arguably) the famous(?) Maria Whittaker's fat chest.

"Panza Kick Boxing – you wonder why it isn't Pansy Wrist Slapping"

COIN-OP CONVERSIONS: THE TRUTH

It doesn't take a genius to notice that most beat-'em-ups have an Oriental theme. That's not solely because most programmers are sad and devoid of any imagination – there's also the fact that most of the available titles first appeared as coin-ops in Japan. One that didn't though is ***Rampage***, from American arcade aficionados Atari Games. In *Rampage*, three of the cinema's favourite monsters run amok in a city, demolishing buildings and slapping each other around for good measure. It was a nice idea, boys, but proved a chore to play, more so when *Rampage* was converted very badly to the Amiga for Activision.

Prominent amongst other converters of arcade beat-'em-ups to the Amiga are US Gold, who've mainly worked from CapCom originals such as ***Human Killing Machine*** and ***Street Fighter***. The less said about the visual and aural mess that was *HKM* the better. The arcade version of *Street Fighter*, however, featured an interesting interface – a Punch-o-matic button. The harder you hit it, the more powerful the on-screen punch or kick. It's a pity the conversion failed to reproduce this or, indeed, capture the game's look and feel: it's far too slow and unrewarding. Incidentally, CapCom's sequel, *Street Fighter II*, is unlikely to make its mark on the Amiga, which I can't see too many of you shedding a great many tears over.

AND – YES! – IT GETS WORSE!

The really sad thing, though, is that *Street Fighter* is by no means the worst beat-'em-up around. Far worse, for instance, is System 3's dismal display of kick boxing, ***Bangkok Knights***. You can't buy it in the shops these days, which is a blessing in disguise as it looks and plays like the very worst Ronco tele-gift.

French publisher Loriciel had a stab at painting a similar picture with their ***Panza Kick Boxing*** simulation. It was released over here through US Gold, though once the flaccid fighting action has been experienced you wonder why they bothered. The fighters are small and perfectly deformed, and their movements are so slow and pathetic it makes you wonder why the event isn't called Pansy Wrist Slapping instead.

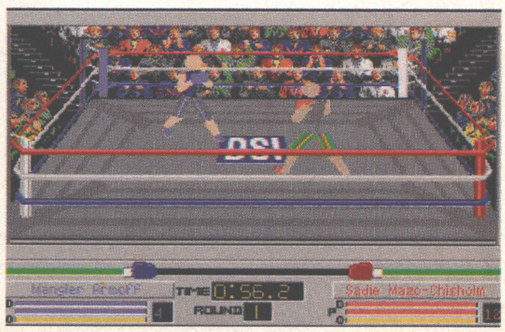
The most impressive aspect of Team 17's more traditional rucking romp, ***Full Contact***, is its title screen, featuring a smoothly-animated silhouette of a ninja geezer doing a poncy dance. Sadly, the fighting itself is far less interesting to watch and only marginally more entertaining to play.

German publisher Thalion tried to provide a variation on the theme with their ***Chambers Of Shaolin*** by including a Do-It-Yourself character generation element. The idea was to pass through the six chambers, taking skill-building tests along the way. By avoiding and kicking in household objects, the player improved attributes such as balance, speed and strength. The character developed could then be saved to disk for use against a human opponent or taking on computer-controlled combatants in a mission to save a kidnapped sister. *Chambers Of Shaolin* certainly has its fans, but we're not amongst them. It plays a little too much like a pile of bricks to be truly satisfying.

IT'S THE PITS

And speaking of which, a pile of bricks is exactly what Teque's Amiga implementation of Atari Games' *Pitfighter* for Domark looks like. The blocky, bare-chested fighters in the pit grow and shrink as they move 'in' and 'out' of the screen, but it's an effect seemingly achieved purely for the sake of it – the punching and kicking action lacks entertainment value.

Like Thalion, Electronic Arts and MicroProse also adopted a slightly different approach, this time leaning more towards the simulation side of combat with their ***Budokan*** and ***Oriental Games*** respectively. Both products provide a collection of different forms of head-to-head combat – things like Karate, Kendo and knocking nunchaku – and a training school to boot. *Budokan*'s not bad, but



Double Dragon 3 **(top) – well at least the graphics are okay – and *4D Sports Boxing* (below) – nice idea and all that, but...**

DEFINITION OF sound

Oriental Games is, despite featuring its own redefinable joystick movement editor so you can choose just how you'd like to play.

BOXING CLEVER

But what of that most noble of arts: boxing? Tough luck, aficionados of the 'sport', there are only two 'simulations' available – Mindscape's ***4D Sports Boxing*** and Storm's conversion of the arcade hit ***Final Blow*** – and both of them are rubbish. The former offers a painfully sluggish slugging match represented by polygon shapes, while the latter's approach is so limited it's simply dreadfully dull to play. Maybe Cinemaware's *TV Sports: Boxing* will put on a significantly more impressive show when (or even if) it's eventually released.

If all this cruel and heartless fighting is too much for your conscience to bear, you could always indulge in a spot of less serious action, that of the grappling kind. Or at least, you could if there were any halfway decent wrestling simulations available... Certainly, Epyx's ageing ***World Championship Wrestling*** is so poor it's not worthy of mention here, especially as it's no longer on release.

WWF Wrestlemania, Ocean's most recent addition to this undernourished area, is, on the other hand, widely available, though really no more worthwhile. It simulates a small portion of the ludicrously popular World Wrestling Federation scene, but does so with no more genuine fighting spirit than the 'actors' who take part in the actual event. *WWF Wrestlemania* lacks most of the thrills and spills that make its OTT real-life counterpart so successful, and the wrestling itself feels far too 'plastic' to be enjoyable.

SCROLLING SCRAPS

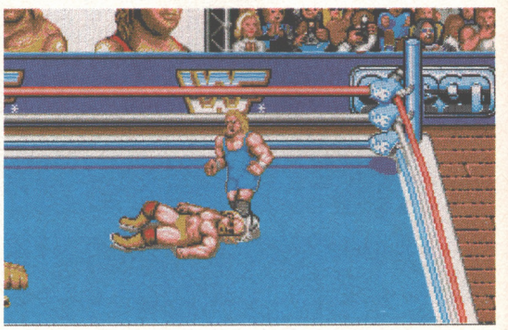
And so we move on, from the straightforward stuff to the scrolling scraps, kicking off with Tecmo's crude but contagiously playable ***Double Dragon***. *Double Dragon* appeared in the arcades in 1987 and somehow managed to look and play considerably worse on the Amiga two years later.

For what it's worth, the storyline concerns two heroes, Billy and Jimmy, on a mission to overthrow the Shadow Boss who has kidnapped their true love and whisked her away to his Black Warrior hideout. This amounts to a stroll through several scrolling stages, each with a different visual theme and dozens of bad dudes to duff up with your fists and feet or using the handful of weapons (mainly chains) found along the way.

The flat, poorly-drawn characters and scenery were in good company with the slow, juddery scrolling. And though it was good that the game provided you with a large number of opponents, the disk on which the product came took the worst hammering as it was accessed far too often.

The situation improved with the sequel – ***Double Dragon II*** – but not much. It was basically more of what people bought *Double Dragon* for, only *DDII* looked and played a tad better than its predecessor. The high level of disk accessing was no more acceptable though.

In fairness, both *Double Dragon*s are a right laugh when two human players are involved and they decide to hinder each other's progress, which is more than can be said for the third instalment – ***Double Dragon III: The Rosetta Stones***. *Double Dragon III* came not from Melbourne House as did its forerunners, but from Storm. Their conversion is more appealing to look at than its forerunners, but more appalling to play.



***Last 'It's alright if you like that sort of thing' Ninja 3* (top) and *WWF* (below) – hopelessly tacky in all the wrong ways.**

SHINOBI! (BLESS YOU)

Taking a step backwards into Storm's past life we find ourselves scraping ***Shinobi*** from the soles of our shoes... When Sega released *Shinobi* into the arcades you could smell it a mile off. The mix of scrolling action and first-person-perspective-shuriken-star-throwing left you feeling far from slap happy, but still somehow managed to prove popular among the neanderthal sections of society. Fortunately, the smell became all the more unbearable when the conversion was released through The Sales Curve. It stank. Perhaps the game was simply too bad in the first place for any amount of saving.

NINJAS AND ALL THAT SORT OF GUFF

The Sales Curve did manage to make amends with their class conversion of Taito's ***The Ninja Warriors***, though. The arcade original's simple scrolling scrapping was presented through a triple-screen display – an effect which was reproduced on the Amiga by a novel letter box-shaped widescreen format. So far, so neat, but looks aren't everything, and *Ninja Warriors* lacks meat on its playable bones, quickly becoming a repetitive slog.

Imagine's reconstruction of Data East's ***Dragon Ninja*** is no more or less durable than *The Ninja Warrior*s. The fighters pack a powerful punch, complete with a flaming 'power-up' effect, but their moves and those of the opponents are limited – as is the potential for flavoursome feedback.

It's unlikely that any trace of the taste of *Dragon Ninja* will be removed by sampling US Gold's conversions of CapCom's ***Tiger Road*** and Irem's ***Vigilante***, either. *Tiger Road*'s hero is Lee Wong and he's up against kid kidnapper

THE PAINFUL TRUTH: BEAT-'EM-UPS ARE GENERALLY CRAP - OFFICIAL

Game	Publisher	Price	Rating
4D SPORTS BOXING	MINDSCAPE	£25.99	**
ALTERED BEAST	THE HIT SQUAD	£9.99	*
BANGKOK KNIGHTS	N/A		*
BARBARIAN	KIXX	£9.99	***
BARBARIAN II	KIXX	£9.99	*
BUDOKAN	STAR PERFORMERS	£9.99	***
CHAMBERS OF SHAOLIN	THALION	£24.99	**
DOUBLE DRAGON	TRONIX	£9.99	**
DOUBLE DRAGON II	TRONIX	£9.99	***
DOUBLE DRAGON III	STORM	£25.99	*
DRAGON NINJA	THE HIT SQUAD	£9.99	*
DYNAMITE DUX	ACTIVISION	£24.99	*
FINAL BLOW	STORM	£25.99	*
FINAL FIGHT	US GOLD	£25.99	*****
FULL CONTACT	TEAM 17	£9.99	*
GOLDEN AXE	VIRGIN GAMES	£24.99	****
HUMAN KILLING MACHINE	KIXX	£9.99	*
IK+	THE HIT SQUAD	£9.99	*****
KARATE KID II	MICRODEAL	N/A	***
THE LAST NINJA	SYSTEM 3	£24.99	*
THE LAST NINJA II	THE HIT SQUAD	£9.99	*
THE LAST NINJA III	SYSTEM 3	£25.99	**
THE NINJA WARRIORS	TRONIX	£9.99	**
NINJA SPIRIT	ACTIVISION	£24.99	*
ORIENTAL GAMES	MICROSTYLE	£24.99	**
PANZA KICK BOXING	FUTURA	£24.99	*
PRINCE OF PERSIA	DOMARK	£24.99	****
RAMPAGE	THE HIT SQUAD	£9.99	*
SHINOBI	TRONIX	£9.99	*
STREET FIGHTER	KIXX	£9.99	*
TIGER ROAD	KIXX	£9.99	*
VIGILANTE	KIXX	£9.99	*
WWF WRESTLEMANIA	OCEAN	£25.99	*

and all-round bad guy Ryu Ken's henchmen. Though probably not for long – it's as bland as drinking water after a can of Lucozade Sport.

Vigilante's plot, on the other hand, is more like *Double Dragon*'s – only the names have been changed to protect the innocent. The girl in trub in *Vigilante* is called Madonna, but expressing yourself and justifying your love by rescuing her is a task far more borderline than taking a holiday you'd cherish. Ahem.

FANTASY LAND BEAT-'EM-UPS

The body-count rose with Activision's conversions of Sega cult-gatherers ***Altered Beast*** and ***Dynamite Dux***. *Altered Beast* has a novel power-increasing angle – the hunky heroes can turn into large and ferocious animals with magical powers – but big sprites (which leave little spare screen left to move around) and limited choice of movement make events less thrilling than they might have been. *Dynamite Dux* looks like a right laugh too, with the eponymous red and blue mallards wielding boxing gloves and water guns and taking on wacky and zany characters such as moose heads and flames. Unfortunately, it's all so... so-so that you end up smiling on the other side of your face after a few plays.

HURRAH FOR SOME GOOD GAMES!

It's been a pretty depressing run so far then, hasn't it? Thankfully the whole scrolling beat-'em-up idea was soon to take a turn for the better, an upswing spearheaded by the releases of Sega's fantasy-orientated ***Golden Axe*** and CapCom's urban jungle simulation ***Final Fight***. Both titles featured control modes far more user-friendly than anything that had come before, employing elements of context sensitivity. There are very few joystick-position-related moves to remember – instead, all that's required of the player during combat is sensible positioning of their on-screen alter ego and rapid presses of a fire button. The character controlled then performs all the appropriate moves.

In fact, it could be said that these two represent the beat-'em-up high point to date. Neither are what you might call great games – they're certainly not perfect by any means – but they do indicate a potential way forward. Dimentia's conversion of *Golden Axe* for Virgin Games is certainly worth a look – even though it's not the most demanding game in the world. There are only six short scrolling levels to negotiate, and the adversaries' IQs often fluctuate, but it sure looks mighty fine and offers intensely pleasurable short-term entertainment with a host of visually-rewarding moves and magic spells to execute. Two player mode is better yet.

Creative Materials' version of *Final Fight* for US Gold isn't as playable as its arcade parent but it's by no means a disaster. The action's not quite as thump-believable as it should have been, and it does tend to slow down when the going gets busy, but in its favour you do get the unique opportunity to use some slick moves to slap the fat bald people and cartwheeling chicks who are sent up against you.

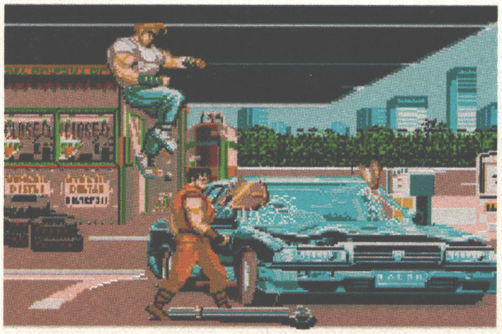
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

So *Golden Axe* and *Final Fight* represent a step in the right direction. But by now you should have realised the painful truth: that there are no excellent beat-'em-ups available for the Amiga. Oh sure, there are a few very good ones, but to put it bluntly, without beating around the bush, Amiga beat-'em-ups are by and large crap.

When it comes to executing rock-hard moves, none of them are fast enough for a start. Little thought has been paid to providing intuitive control modes, and there are often too many extraneous moves to execute anyway. Very few feel 'thumpy' enough either, with a lack of suitable bone-crunching sounds or special visual effects.

And do you know what? Worse still, there's nothing even remotely promising on the horizon...●

DEFINITION OF sound



Golden Axe **(top) and US Gold's** ***Final Fight*** **(below) – probably the only recent Amiga beat-'em-ups worth bothering with.**

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DO THE write THING

It seems we've got a lot of serious readers out there right now. This month sees discussion on everything from Commodore's business strategy to X-rated PD disks to the eternal argument about the AMIGA POWER All-time Top 100. Thankfully there's always one weirdo out there who just wants to educate us in the ways of *Tetris* and philosophy.

● Address your letters to AMIGA POWER, Beaufort Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath Avon, BA1 2BW

Dear AP,

I am sick and tired of people writing to magazines asking about rumoured upgrades and developments to current Amiga models. These letters usually imply that the writer is in a state of panic about being left with an obsolete machine. I've even seen someone ask if their CDTV is about to become an expensive CD audio player after being superseded by a new model!

Come on, all you panic-merchants, wake up. Since the introduction of the A500, Commodore are to be congratulated on ensuring that upgrades are always available. *(Not too sure about this bit, actually. I haven't found myself tripping over A500P upgrade kits in the shops around here - Ed).* You can fit new Kickstart ROMs, the ECS when it becomes available as a kit and, as you have mentioned, even 1.2, 1.3 and 2.0 ROMs in the same machine to ensure full compatibility with software.

We could all live in a state of 'techno-fear' and end up permanently waiting to invest in the next upgraded model. Through Commodore's policy your 'old' 1.3 Amiga can be upgraded to the equivalent of a CDTV when the A690 drive appears, so for everyone's sake stop worrying. It has been stated that 24-bit colour and FMV kits will be available for the CDTV as and when standards are finalised *(FMV is Full Motion Video, abbreviation fans. Pat McDonald, Technical Editor of our sister mag Amiga Format, helpfully informs us that the chips to perform this tricky task haven't actually been invented yet. Believe who you will – Ed)*, so let's not have a repeat of the A500 panic with this machine.

Just remember that without progress and innovation we would all be sitting at home, calculating mathematical equations on our Babbage engines instead of enjoying Amiga-based home entertainment. If you are sitting wondering whether to 'buy now' or 'wait and see', go out and spend your money, enjoy yourself now and most importantly of all, don't worry. I am sure that Commodore know how important the existing user-base of Amiga owners are and will not be abandoning them. *(Hmm, I think they do in theory, but it doesn't always work out in practice – witness the lack of response from them to the A500P incompatibility problems. – Ed).*

As a footnote, now that Commodore are advertising the CDTV as an Amiga product will you be reviewing CD based entertainment 'titles'? I sincerely hope you will. Keep up the good work and congratulations on an informative and entertaining read every month.

Yours sincerely,
Stephen J Richardson, Whitley Bay

Broadly I'm in agreement with you, Stephen, but that doesn't mean I go a bundle on all the specifics of what you say. You're right, part of the whole point of the Amiga being a computer is that it can be constantly upgraded and improved by the manufacturer, helping to keep the machine competitive in the face of competition from PCs and whathaveyou. The more often Commodore update things – as long as they don't leave existing users behind, of course – the better, as these updates will attract new users to the Amiga and help the user-base grow, which in turn means more software will be produced and so on. Well handled updates are good for all of us, basically.

The problems come when updates aren't well handled. Can you blame ordinary people for not racing out to buy CDTVs when a) they were so badly marketed, and b) the price was cut by £100, less than six months after release? Or, indeed, for being annoyed at the way Plus compatibility was shrugged off? The A690, FMV, 24-bit colour and all the rest we'll appraise when we see them – they may be great, but they may not.

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Following last month's (issue 10) letters regarding the price increases in software over the past few months, it seems the software industry is maybe revealing its true colours at last. Let's examine the argument for high prices. Pirates claim that the reason why they copy software is because it's too expensive in the first place. The software companies argue that software is priced so high because due to piracy sales figures are low – hence blaming the pirates for the high prices. How is it, then, that software prices have increased so substantially (as discussed in issue 10) when last year Amiga games sales increased by 175 percent? Surely, by the software industry's own argument, prices should have gone down or at least stayed at the same level, not gone up? The industry's argument sounds like something from a bull's bottom!

By the way, in my opinion the dongle is a bad idea. Why do we have to put up with even more ridiculous copy protection devices? Manual code protection is annoying enough without having to faff around plugging stupid (and probably expensive) little pieces of crap into the mouse port. My fragile mouse port already gets enough wear from my second joystick! Anyway, cheers for being the most honest mag around, especially where *Birds Of Prey* was concerned.

Yours faithfully,
Jez Homer, Cheshire.

Actually, regarding price, it's not quite as simple as that. I recently spent five days at Computer Arena '92 (the annual industry conference, where all the software houses get together to talk through shared problems) and one heartening thing was that everyone there agreed that software IS too expensive. The fact is, they need vastly increased volumes to be able to bring prices down, and that won't happen in the near future.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to give you my opinion on the use of dongles by Ocean, and any other company who wants to encourage us to break our Amigas. I think it is common knowledge that one of the weakest points of the Amiga is the connection of the ports on the back of the A500 straight onto the motherboard. Too frequent (or clumsy) swapping of connectors (eg mouse and joystick) is likely either to damage the pins or crack the motherboard itself, requiring a very expensive repair. With the number of machines in use by relatively small children, I think Ocean have taken a very ill-considered move. The safest way to use an Amiga is to keep the connectors →

NO SOFTWARE AT ALL! winner

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Today's cassette and floppy disk market would appear to be a potentially endangered species, with the very clever marketing tactics of the console manufacturers coupled with almost the opposite by the home computer manufacturers. However, we believe there is quite a bit of life left in this market yet. The greatest dangers to ALL software games publishers are monopolistic hardware manufacturers and, most of all, themselves.

Many of you will remember the heady days of the mid 1980s when 8-bit 'full-price' was £5.95. Volumes were tremendous, with most publishers making very good profits. Somewhere around that time the 'Big License' became the in thing, and with the volume/price quotient being on the better side of good, many publishers increased their prices to £9.95. The volume was still there.

The late 80s–early 90s sees us in a very different situation, with the majority of full-price titles failing to even make the first hurdle. Life cycles of only a few weeks are not uncommon (the norm even), before the overstocks are sold off cheaply and the hands are soiled in a deal with a 'budget' publisher.

"Why not just lower the full price point to a level which would give an acceptable volume/life cycle? Easy, isn't it?" Or is it? The real reasons are simple. Poor standards of software, the use of licences to cover inferior product and policies of sell-offs and compilations have led to a cynical attitude on the part of that most powerful person – the consumer. Why on Earth should they pay £25 for something they can get a pal to copy it or just wait a little while until it's on a budget label at a price they can afford? For our part, we then stand back in amazement when we hear publishers bleating about the perceived value of software and making rallying calls to boycott magazines who give away games free on the front cover. What is wrong with these people – are they frightened of the comparison with full-price products? Don't they just lack imagination? They could always give away a free magazine...

Every computer game is virtually unique. Production time in terms of programming, storyboarding, licensor approval etc all add up to many months of work with no guarantees at the end. To predetermine costs of production is impossible, so why should it be so easy to predetermine what price should be paid for it?
Yours sincerely,
Terry Jeffries, Sales Director, Hi-Tec Software

version also available

DO THE write THING

permanently plugged in. I have every port connected and screwed firmly in place, with a pair of switches to allow my children to easily select the required combination of joysticks/mice for whatever game they want to play. If dongles become common, they will only increase the risk of damage to our favourite machine, and I for one will NEVER buy a game (or utility) requiring a dongle. *RoboCop 3* is the first and I sincerely hope the last game to be crossed off my shopping list.

On a slightly lighter note, I currently have over 600 disks in eight boxes. If each required a different dongle, where would I store them, how would I find the one I needed, and where could I afford a big enough house? I already have enough of a problem deciding which game boxes to stash in the bottom of the wardrobes, and which ones just to throw away.

Yours faithfully,
Richard Ellis, Manchester

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Although your magazine is one of the best *(Waddaya mean, 'one of the best'? – Ed)* in the market for Amiga owners and the reviews are generally well detailed and accurate, I can't understand why you insist on ramming down our throats that *Rainbow Islands* is the best game ever when everyone knows quite clearly (except yourselves) that it is most certainly not. Has Stuart 'baby man' Campbell brainwashed all of you with another of his stupid ideas on what makes a good platform game?

Rainbow Islands (for the record) is nothing more than a silly, childish and mediocre platform game that gives the computer game industry a bad reputation in the eyes of most adults who know nothing about it. I'd rather play great platform games such as *Gods*, *Turrican 2* and shoot-'em-ups *Xenon 2* any day than the crap *Rainbow Islands*. The three games I mention Stuart Campbell has the cheek to call CRAP and, quite frankly, this ridiculous state of affairs (from all of you) annoys me considerably. Can't you give decent games the credit they deserve instead of embarrassing our industry?

Graftgold themselves must be mystified themselves as to why you put their picture on the cover with the statement 'The best Amiga game of all time' underneath. If that's the truth then I'm selling my Amiga right now!

Good riddance,
Mark Bobowicz, Crystal Palace

'Baby man', eh? (Whatever that means). The point here, I think, is that if feeble-witted name-calling is the best you can manage in place of a rational argument, then shoot yourself now, Mark. So you don't like Stuart's ideas on what makes a good platform game? Fine, let's hear yours, then. 'Game X is crap, it's not as good as game Y, 'cos I said so, so there' is the sort of stuff that'd get you laughed out of a primary school playground. Let's continue this debate when your argument's got a bit more meat to it, eh? And by the way, just in case we haven't made it clear yet, Rainbow Islands *IS the best Amiga game ever – or at least, it is until our all-new Top 100 appears next month. If you want to see us eat our words on this one, be here next month...*

Dear AMIGA POWER,

I have been reading through your mag since it was the first issue and I think it is amazing and brill too. Anyhow, I saw the article you did on *Scooby Doo And Scrappy Doo* and how amazing you said it was, so I went out and bought it from a mail order company. As soon as the game came I opened the box to play on it and to my surprise the label on the disk was typed and it had been stuck on to cover up the old game label. I took the label off and it was a game that had been copied over by the mail order company. I also found it strange that there were no instructions with the game. I think that the company has been copying games illegally – please can you give me some advice on what to do? Oh yeah, and I almost forgot – I was playing the game the other day and it totally bodged up. Fishy, eh?

Yours,
Peter Jones

That's a very strange story, Peter. It's a shame you didn't tell us the name of the mail order company so we could check up on it. We can probably put you straight on one thing, though – Hi-Tec's games usually come with the instructions on the reverse side of the inlay, so if you take the bit of paper with the cover illustration on it out from under the plastic covering on the box, you should find them on there. (Not that you really need any instructions for Scooby And Scrappy *anyway.)*

Dear Sirs,

I am sure that by now you have read articles about computer porn in various newspapers. I have noticed that you yourselves (the honest magazine that you are) have various adverts for PD which include some of the 'X-RATED' disks. What I must ask you – and I'm only one of many, I'm sure *(Nope, you're the only one, actually – Ed)* – is are you all actually aware of what goes into your pages other than your own material, because I've come to a few conclusions why this is advertised, which are:-

(1) You don't give a toss except for the money you receive.

(2) You don't even look over all what goes into your magazine which isn't your material.

(3) You think it is an older age group that reads your (wonderful) magazine.

I would also like to know (if possible) if the PD adverts are going to be extracted, or just the offending disks. Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully,
John(?), Farnham

First off, sorry if we've got your name wrong, John, but your writing was a bit on the scrawly side. As to your problem, well, we're not quite sure what it is, to be honest. Okay, some stuff you can get from PD libraries may be offensive to some tastes – but if you don't like it, don't buy it. Nobody's forcing you – it's all pretty clearly labelled as to what it is. While we have a sort of unwritten policy about what sort of ads we'll carry – you won't see any saucy 0898 numbers advertised in AMIGA POWER, for instance – but that doesn't extend to banning PD library ads if the X-rated stuff they mention (normally only a small proportion of the ad anyway) is a) within the legal limits as to what's permissible and b) not presented in a salacious or pornographic way. However, if anyone else out there has particularly strong feelings on this we'd like to hear your opinions – policies can be changed, after all...

Dear AP,

A few months ago I purchased an extra disk drive. With more and more games now having two disks I thought it was a worthwhile move – no more disk swapping! 'Problem solved!', I thought as I played *TV Sports: Football* without the distraction and delay caused by the on-screen prompts for the other disk. I then picked out all the other games I own that have more than one disk and began checking them. I was displeased, to say the least, to discover that the majority of these did not acknowledge that £65 of my hard-earned cash was sitting there, disk inserted, awaiting a command to load which never came. The screen said 'Insert disk in df0'. Why is this? Surely it doesn't take a lot for programmers to cater for users with two drives?

I am beginning to wonder whether my purchase was a good decision or not. Fair enough, it does save time when formatting disks etc, but I don't sit there doing that all day, do I? So come on all you programmers out there, is it really too much to ask? After all, compared to the amount of time that you spend creating impressive graphical routines, it's just a drop in the ocean, isn't it?

Yours faithfully,
Richard Townend, Keighley

We couldn't agree with you more, Richard. Non-recognition of extra drives seems to us to be just lazy programming (unless anybody else has a convincing explanation for it) and the sooner the situation is fixed, the better for all of us. Anyone disagree? Thought not...

Greetings,

Being, as you undoubtedly are, an Amiga games magazine, you must receive an unhealthy amount of weird letters. This is one of them.

Firstly, I would like to point out the similarity between the spiritual goal of a Vedantist Hindu and the half coma of a *Tetris* player.

"Excluding external objects, his gaze fixed between the eyebrows, the inward and outward breathings passing equally through his nostrils" –The Geeta, Chapter V.

Now that I come to meditate on it, it is remarkably close to dedicated *Lemmings* fanaticism, is it not? Have many of your reviewers achieved nirvana? *(Mark has, but we keep telling him to turn it down – Ed).* Or is it merely the ley lines?

Secondly, I would like to complain about Francophobic reviews and the lack of onomatopoeia in your writing. *(Right, that's this letter going in the bin – Whoosh! Clang! – Ed).*

I am a committed PC user, think AMIGA POWER is a surprisingly decent mag, and my runes tell me you are not going to print this.

Zoroastro 'Billy The Kid' Major, Dorset

Next!

Dear AMIGA POWER,

There's this boy in my school who is a Year 10. He swapped me a game and so did I. But it wasn't a fair swap. He swapped me *Mario Brothers 3* for Amiga, but all it was was a blank disk. I told him that it was just a blank disk but he just said it wasn't like that when he had it. He keeps saying that he's got cousins in America and he would not give me my game back unless I give him some good games. Please can you tell me that *Mario Brothers 3* is really out on Amiga please?

Yours,
Jaymin Acharya, Leicester

We've got bad news for you, Jaymin – your 'friend' is a liar and a thief. Mario Brothers 3 *isn't out for the Amiga and it never will be, either. This guy is swindling you, and if he doesn't give you your game back, we say call the police.*

Dear AP,

I was reading my friend's Commodore Format and I came across Stuart Campbell saying the Commodore 64 games have more playability than Amiga games and Amiga games are overrated. I disagree.

Yours sincerely,
Daniel Miller, Bristol

"It wasn't me, guv, I never said nothing of the sort! It was that Colin Campbell, he put words in my mouth – I'm just a patsy!" - Stuart Harvey Oswald

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Recently I was looking in the computer department of a well-known newsagent when I noticed a sign saying 'Electronic Copying Service'. I looked on the shelf and saw the prices and formats these games could be copied for, they were £3.99 for 8-bits and £7.99 for the ST and Amiga. The boxes were all identical and on each box the title and cover of the game was printed. Some of the games they had were *Rocket Ranger*, *Edd The Duck*, *X-Out* (which is available on Ocean's The Hit Squad), and many more. Can you get a licence for this? I would be interested to know and hear if any other people have seen this 'Electronic Copying Service', and what they think of it.

Yours,
Mark Kamaris, Sheffield

We agree, it's a very weird way for people to go about things considering all the talk about piracy problems, but the fact is that this Electronic Copying stuff is perfectly legit. All it really is means that software shops don't hold games actually in stock – they just keep the boxes, then when someone comes in to buy a game, it's electronically copied onto a disk via

DO THE write THING

modem (or some similar method). It's a slightly bizarre idea (it seems to us to blur the perceived distinction between buying the real thing and getting a pirate copy, although this particular system IS perfectly legal), but you can see the advantage to shops – they don't have to risk getting, say, 100 copies of WWF *in and then being left with them unsold after people read unfavourable reviews. Unfortunately, to get a licence for it you do have to be a shop, so don't get too excited by the idea.*

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Okay, I don't want to write a letter complimenting your butts off, but before I go on I'd just like to say that as far as games go you're the best, in fact I would say that there isn't a games mag for any machine (yes, including those poncy consoles) that can touch you for quality editorial content, so well done, people. This doesn't mean, however, that you can't improve and I would like to offer you some of my views which, for me at least, would make AP even better.

Firstly, though, I need to go off at a bit of a tangent, so bear with me on this one as it might just be worth it. I've read a lot of letters and so on slating the whole idea of coin-op conversions, and with people like US Gold thinking about pulling out it's giving me a little cause for concern. Yes, it is a fact that no matter how good the Amiga's hardware is (was), it's no match for some of the chips they're putting inside the arcade machines nowadays, but is that really a good enough reason not to bother with getting the licence to turn it into a computer game? Just compare how many decent licensed games licensed from a coin-op there are, compared to good film/TV licences.

Even in your own Top 100, coin-op conversions outnumber the film licences by about 18 to one. Coin-ops are designed by people earning more money than most in the home market, and have more to lose if the games are not attractive and playable. Seven times out of ten the winning formula for a good game is there, save maybe a few tweaks to the gameplay to suit the personal computers. If this trend continues a lot of good stuff will be slipping through the net.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not going to mourn the decline of naff old stuff that was crap in the arcades, but what of classics like *Smash TV*? Maybe not as good as it should have been, but still one of the better games released in recent months and if you love the coin-op its still worth getting hold of. I don't fully believe the argument that coin-ops cannot be converted to the Amiga successfully. Okay, so no conversion for the C64 or Spectrum could ever be confused with the real thing but there are some that are still more playable than their Amiga counterparts (*Power Drift* springs to mind, but there are many more).

When it comes down to it, it's not how good the hardware is, it's how good the programmers are. If no-one converted coin-ops, no-one in your office would be playing *Rainbow Islands* today. That's not to say that graphics don't matter, this is one time when they *do* play a big part. It helps to achieve the atmosphere and feel of the original, it could almost make or break the conversion, and bring me nicely *(More like 'eventually' – Ed)* to the original thread of the letter. How can you improve?

Well, I think it would be a damn fine idea that when you are reviewing coin-ops you should add a screenshot of the arcade parent next to the Amiga ones, so we can ascertain at least one aspect of the conversion – the graphics. I don't know how easy it is to get screenshots of arcade games, but I don't suppose it can be that hard, after all you sometimes show them as part of previews, such as *Bonanza Bros* and *Final Fight* in your autumn special for instance. *(Have you ever tried taking good photos of a moving arcade machine image? It's not much fun, let me tell you – Ed).* Also, you could add a small box called Arcade Accuracy which would tell you how close the game was to the real thing, and the mark it got there wouldn't necessarily affect the overall score (such as might happen with *Final Blow* or *WWF*).

I hope that you find these comments useful, but I would like to point out that I'm not against original games, it's just that as they are in no immediate danger there's not much reason to defend them. We just need good playable games, and as long as we keep our options open I don't see why we shouldn't get them, no matter where they originate from.

Keep up the good work,
Kellie Childs, Chadwell-St-Marys

Dear AP,

I thought I'd write to you to let you know just how BRILLIANT the Phoenix ROM sharer *(For solving A500P incompatibility probs – Ed)* you mentioned previously is. I bought it for just under £60 (you have to buy the Workbench 1.3 chip as well, you know), but this price included next day delivery from a company called First Choice in Leeds. It took about half an hour, tops, to install and now all of my previously incompatible software, as if by magic, WORKS! Of course, I went totally ape and ran around the room screaming (so would you if you'd previously spent £50 on software that didn't load – and no, they weren't on the incompatibility lists). Anyway, my advice to all A500P users is to buy one NOW! (Be careful though, 'cos they invalidate your warranty.)

Yours very happy again,
Mark Adkin, Mitcham

AND ANOTHER THING... BUMPER SPECIAL

Yes, we've got such a bulging mailbag at the moment that in order to fit in as many top interesting points as possible, we've had to cut lots of your letters down to the bare bones, so let's get on with it before we waste any more valuable space.

• Iain Mackenzie of London has 'an Amiga B2000 with 68000/68882 (33mhz), 3 meg 32 bit RAM, 3 meg other RAM and a 65 meg hard disk'. While accepting that this isn't a standard set up, he says it improves many games immeasurably (citing Sierra's *Red Baron*, reviewed this issue, as an example) and says we should take account of this in our reviews, so that software houses will continue to support the more unusual Amiga configurations. Well, Iain, we would do, but we've only got ordinary Amigas here, so we can't. Simple as that, I'm afraid.

• Ian Pugh of Gosport would like to see the coverdisk include some DPaint pictures drawn by us lot – 'not necessarily showing your artwork, but maybe showing a piece they did when they had a spare moment and were bored'. Nice idea, Ian, but (a) we don't *have* any spare moments and (b) you really don't want to see what Gary Penn comes up with when he's playing around on DPaint. Trust us.

• Whereas Sacha Vanna of Sevenoaks would like to see us do a game built up over several months, with new levels in a data-disk style featured on each issue. It's certainly novel, but we fear it wouldn't be fair to people who might not have bought the issue which had the main program on it and couldn't use the new levels. Mind you, it would serve them right for not buying every issue in the first place, we suppose.

• Now this one's odd. Tom Wright of Eastbourne quite fancies a game about building up a motorcycle from scratch – 'The 1000 Vincent, for instance. Of course, each part would have to look exactly as in the workshop manual, and each action would have to be completed correctly, like compressing the rings on the piston before fitting into the barrel. I bet all those young Amiga owners out there on two wheels would love it'. Er, yes...

• Steven Frew of Solihull speaks for us all when he pleads with Julian Gollop to convert his 8-bit classic *Chaos* onto the Amiga. Sadly there are no plans for it, but you may be cheered to know that *Laser Squad 2* from the same author is on the way.

• Ludovic Fishpond (yeah, right) of Ferndown thinks we should start up a 'Trainspotters Club like there used to be in Sinclair User, where people write in pointing out mistakes in the magazine and you talk your way out of them'. Nice idea, Ludo, but we're not going to use it because the Trainspotters Club was actually in Your Sinclair, which was edited by me, and I'm in the huff with you for mixing it up with that crappy Sinclair User. Ha.

• Mrs Sherry Dickinson of Ashford would like to know if there are any games out there with 'female appeal', like 'a Barbie-doll game or something to do with equestrian sports'. We seem to remember a company called CCS or CRL or something bringing out a series of titles under the collective name 'Games For Girls' on 8-bit a few years ago, but they were mocked and ridiculed for being sexist, so the concept died a speedy death. Anyone know of anything appropriate happening nowadays?

• Bruce Smith of Canberra in Australia points out that the Amiga can support up to three-button joysticks and would like to see the facility better supported. He also says that Sega Mega Drive controllers make great 2-button sticks for the Amiga.

• Richard Metcalfe of Hurworth wants to know what mark we'd give *Kick Off 2* if we reviewed it today. A quick poll around the office came up with Matt Bielby giving it 81%, Mark prefers 42%, Matt Squires says 68%, and Stuart goes for 23%. And that, dear hearts, is ABSOLUTELY the last word we'll be printing in Do The Write Thing on the subject of *Kick Off 2*. This correspondence is now officially closed.

• J Dowley of London wants to know if the magazine is going to close after we reach the letter 'R' on our spine. Er, we didn't think of that. Gulp...

• Sarah-Jayne Warnes of Wymondham wants to know which is better, *Sarakon*, *Shanghai* or *Shanghai II*. Well, Sarah-Jayne, *Sarakon* is excellent, *Shanghai* is better but totally unavailable, and *Shanghai II* is better still but is now unlikely to be released on the Amiga 'for the forseeable future'. Hope this helps.

• Kon Katsipis of somewhere or other (sorry, we lost the rest of the letter, Kon) wants to see a highscore page. We're pretty dubious, but if lots of you write in asking for one we'll see what we can do.

• Faron Smith of Sunderland wants to know if any of these games are going to appear on the Amiga: *Terminator* (Mega Drive version), *Sonic The Hedgehog*, *Vendetta*, *Simpsons* (coin-op), *Streets Of Rage* and *Street Fighter 2*. The answers are no, almost certainly not and definitely not for ages, maybe, probably not, no and probably not. Sorry, Faron, but life's like that.

• Josh Addison of Auckland in New Zealand says that if we don't think *Turrican 2* is a game not to be missed, we must be too stupid to exist. Well, we seem to be still here, Josh, so it looks like you're wrong. And on that note, it's goodbye from us for now. See you next month!

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ABANDONED PLACES
Electronic Zoo £29.99

Uppers – Simply massive – almost certainly the biggest role playing game yet, with (at least) three times as much ground to cover as *Eye Of The Beholder*. ***Downers*** – Poor graphics, stilted animation and if you're the owner of a single-drive Amiga there's too much disk swapping. ***The Bottom Line*** – With a bit more finesse could have been a real winner. As it stands, a worthy and undeniably good value adventure game. Who says size isn't everything? ★★★★

AFRIKA KORPS
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – Intelligent opponents set it apart from the standard wargame. ***Downers*** – But not enough to give it any flair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just because it's a wargame, it doesn't mean it has to be this primitive. ★

AH37-M THUNDERHAWK
Core £30.99

Uppers – The fastest, slickest 3D graphics yet to grace the Amiga. The arcade approach makes things much easier to get to grips with. ***Downers*** – The lack of real sim elements may put some off, and the mouse control is a bit unwieldy. ***The Bottom Line*** – A brilliantly executed arcade-simulation crossover, which captures the frenetic helicopter feel quite excellently. ★★★★★

ALIEN BREED
Team 17 £25.99

Uppers – Fast-moving and atmospheric *Gauntlet* variant, with lots of lovely touches, a two player mode, and a free *Pong* game! ***Downers*** – Only six levels, and it's not the kind of game you're likely to come back to when you've finished it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not a bad effort at all from the ex-PD boys, but maybe a little thin to last for long. ★★★★

ALIEN STORM
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – *Golden Axe* given a futuristic sci-fi scenario. ***Downers*** – The elements of playability which made *Golden Axe* so great are missing from this one. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically adept, but sorely lacking in every other respect ★★

ALPHA WAVES
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Nice 3D bouncing romp. Bizarre, but endearing (in a French sort of way). ***Downers*** – It tends to feel like an executive toy, and a very expensive one at that. ***The Bottom Line*** – A novel diversion but no great shakes. ★★

ALTERED DESTINY
Accolade £29.99

Uppers – An absorbing adventure in true American style. ***Downers*** – It's not really anything new, and it sure isn't up to Lucasfilm standards. ***The Bottom Line*** – You could do worse, but you could certainly do better. ★★★

AMIGA ENCOUNTER
Novagen £20.42

Uppers – Very fast and atmospheric. ***Downers*** – It's just *Battlezone* yet again. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good old-fashioned zooming 'n' blasting fun, but it really should have been a budget game. ★★★

AMNIOS
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Another old Williams arcade classic gets dusted down and re-interpreted (this time it's *Sinistar*). ***Downers*** – It's already been done better (if not as lavishly) by the under-rated *Photon Storm*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good for an occasional blast. ★★★

ANOTHER WORLD
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – Near perfect graphics and some truly breathtaking setpieces. ***Downers*** – The frustration level rises to health-risk level at times. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not a true classic, but

destined to become a landmark. ★★★★★

ARMOUR-GEDDON
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Lots of tanks, lots of planes, lots of places to go. It's deep and wide and tall. ***Downers*** – Takes a lot of self-discipline to play properly. ***The Bottom Line*** – A natural successor to *Carrier Command*. ★★★★

ARMALYTE
Thalamus £25.99

Uppers – Enjoyable in an old-fashioned sort of way. ***Downers*** – Sloppy presentation and inadequate design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Totally eclipsed by Activision's *R-Type II*. ★★

ARNHEM
CCS £19.95

Uppers – A 8-bit classic wargame finally brought to Amiga owners. ***Downers*** – ...but nobody really wanted it anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – Primitive beyond belief – even wargamers should give it a wide berth. ★

A-10 TANK KILLER
Dynamix (Sierra) £35.75

Uppers – A wealth of typical flight sim-style detail. ***Downers*** – Gameplay suffers due to the sluggish frame rate and lack of a real flying 'feel'. ***The Bottom Line*** – A interesting but flawed attempt at taking the flight simulation genre a stage further. ★★★

ATOMINO
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Easy to pick up, with thousands of levels to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Can covalent bonding be fun? We're not sure. Rather samey; very tough; crap music. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slightly similar to *Pipe Mania* in some ways – if you liked that, then try this one for size. ★★★

BABY JO
Loriciels £24.99

Uppers – Sweet *Mario*-influenced game with barrels of cuteness and lots of simple fun. ***Downers*** – Death by full nappy – yeuch! ***The Bottom Line*** – Lovable and entertaining, if technically a bit on the crap side. Overpriced for what it is, though. ★★

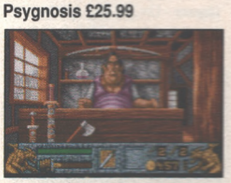
BADLANDS
Tengen (Domark) £19.99

Uppers – A close conversion... ***Downers*** – ...of a crap overhead-view arcade race game. ***The Bottom Line*** – So workmanlike its jeans hang over its arse. ★★

THE BALL GAME
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Based on the excellent but un-released *Infection* puzzle game. ***Downers*** – The concept is spoiled by senseless changes to the rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – Interesting, but ineptly executed. ★★

BARBARIAN 2
Psygnosis £25.99



Uppers – It looks good and there's a generous measure of senseless brutality and fantasy atmosphere. ***Downers*** – Very repetitive and very shallow in the gameplay stakes. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Shadow Of The Beast* fans will love it. ★★★

BATTLE CHESS II – CHINESE CHESS
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Cute graphics, and a new angle on the chess theme. ***Downers*** – The animations soon become tiresome, and Chinese chess isn't half as interesting as the standard game anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good as a showpiece game, but a failure as a piece of playable software. ★★

BATTLE ISLE
Ubi Soft £29.99

Uppers – Easy to get to grips with. Looks lovely, and the intro sequence is even funny. ***Downers*** – Disk access at every turn and combat which seems to be random are a pain. ***The Bottom Line*** – An enormously promising and brave idea which hasn't quite come off successfully. ★★★★

BEAST BUSTERS
Activision £25.99

Uppers – Graphically close to the original arcade version. ***Downers*** – Tends to slow down when there's a lot happening on screen, and it's far too easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Doesn't really compare too well with all the other *Op Wolf* games on the Amiga. ★★

BIG BUSINESS
Magic Bytes £25.99

Uppers – Well-programmed and a fairly original concept. Would you believe, a 'humorous business simulation'? ***Downers*** – It's true, though the humour is feeble-witted stereotyping, and the business part is tedious number-crunching. ***The Bottom Line*** – Some nice touches, but at the end of the day it just isn't any fun to play at all. ★★

BIG RUN
Storm £25.99

Uppers – Everything you could reasonably expect of a motor racing coin-op conversion is flawlessly rendered in this rather old fashioned rolling road effort. ***Downers*** – Well, can you think of anything new it has to offer? A tedious lack of scope and variety. ***The Bottom Line*** – Extremely basic gameplay and over-familiar graphics make this pretty dull going.★★

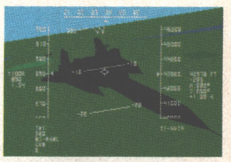
BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE
Capstone (Accolade) £24.99

Uppers – In our humble opinion, a most excellent subject for a licence. The game even manages to capture some of the flavour of the bodacious film too. ***Downers*** – But that doesn't stop it being a strong contender for the 'Weakest Gameplay In The World' award. ***The Bottom Line*** – Something of a missed opportunity. Let's hope for better things from the game of the film sequel. ★★

BILLIARDS II SIMULATOR
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Plenty of variations, including a 'crazy pool' with an octagonal table. ***Downers*** – Neither the 2D or 3D modes allow a decent shot to be made, and the 'feel' of the sport is lost completely. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another game which crumbles in the face of its competition, this time in the form of *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*. ★★

BIRDS OF PREY
Electronic Arts £34.99



Uppers – Phenomenally comprehensive. A wider choice of aircraft than every flight sim ever put together. ***Downers*** – The screen update is excruciatingly jerky. The controls are as unrealistic as ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – The most complex flight sim to date. Virtually guaranteed to hold your attention for months. ★★★★

BLACK CRYPT
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Nicely-presented hack-and-slash role-playing with a strong feeling of progression. ***Downers*** –

Well done, you've managed to plough your way right to the back of the mag, which means it's time for your monthly reward – The Bottom Line, quite simply the world's greatest guide to the vast back catalogue of old Amiga games. This month's new entries include *John Madden Football, Harlequin* and *Shadowlands* as the real standouts, as well as the likes of *Storm Master, Black Crypt, Abandoned Places* (there's been a real flood of RPGs over the last couple of months) and *Videokid* as well worth considering. The Bottom Line is the only constantly updated guide to the past year's crop of software around – don't even consider buying a game without it!

THE BOTTOM LINE

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

Artistically and atmospherically this game offers absolutely nothing new. ***The Bottom Line*** – Although seemingly quite ordinary, there's something about it which just clicks, making it an enjoyable slice of FRP. ★★★★

BLADE WARRIOR
Image Works £25.99

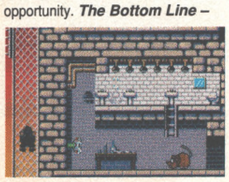
Uppers – Pretty breathtaking graphics, with plenty of action and puzzling too. ***Downers*** – The gameplay is unlikely to be to everyone's taste. ***The Bottom Line*** – Possibly the most atmospheric game ever. ★★★★

BLUE MAX
Mindscape £34.99

Uppers – Less techie than most flying thangs. Some rather spiffing sound compliments the WWI feel nicely. ***Downers*** – Not a winner in the user-friendliness stakes, and the slow and sloppy main game never (ahem) really takes off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull. *Not* the definitive bi-plane game for Biggles buffs it should have been. ★

THE BLUES BROTHERS
Titus £25.99

Uppers – So playable its frightening. And it's funny too. ***Downers*** – The two player mode is a wasted opportunity. ***The Bottom Line*** –



Probably the best character licence ever to appear on the Amiga. ★★★★

BONANZA BROS
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – An original(ish) theme complemented by a unique and interesting visual approach. ***Downers*** – What's there is a right laugh, but only for a limited 10 scenarios. ***The Bottom Line*** – Stylish, but lacking longevity. ★★★★

BOOLY
Loriciels £19.99

Uppers – More novel than the average puzzler, and an interesting blend of logic, tactics and luck. ***Downers*** – Possibly requires too much self-discipline to play properly for most people. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fascinating and moderately entertaining, but it's always going to be a minority-appeal kind of thing. ★★★

BOROBODUR
Thalamus £25.99

Uppers – The graphics aren't bad, if a little crude, and some of the

problem solving does at least tax the brain. ***Downers*** – It isn't the worst game ever seen at AMIGA POWER, but we're not that far away here, really. ***The Bottom Line*** – Half-hearted. ★

BOSTON BOMB CLUB
Silmarils £25.99

Uppers – A neat twist on the sliding block type of puzzle game. ***Downers*** – It hasn't got the longest game life ever, and the basic concept won't exactly light everybody's fire. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the better puzzlers we've seen lately. Pleasing, fun and very French. ★★★★

BRAIN BLASTERS
Ubi Soft £25.99

Uppers – Well, there's a simultaneous two player mode. ***Downers*** – But it's only really remotely playable when played solo. ***The Bottom Line*** – A sad, simplistic and ineffective puzzler. ★

BRAT
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Very pretty, very smooth, very challenging. ***Downers*** – ...and very, very irritating indeed, especially if you hate the central character. ***The Bottom Line*** – Okay if you play it with the sound off. ★★★

BREACH 2
Impressions £24.99

Uppers – Stick with it and you'll find an immensely rewarding space/strategy blast with loads of levels. ***Downers*** – Scrappy graphics and some awkward quirks will deter many. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loved *Laser Squad*? Then you'll probably take a shine to *Breach 2*. ★★

BREACH 2 (ENHANCED)
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – A strategy role-playing game done the old-fashioned (and playable) way. ***Downers*** – It's nothing new and it doesn't exactly look modern. ***The Bottom Line*** – Surprisingly deep and fun. ★★★

BRIGADE COMMANDER
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Desert Storm scenarios give it a nice touch of topicality. ***Downers*** – The usual crap graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Friendlier than the average wargame, and more playable too. ★★★

BUILDERLAND
Loriciels £24.99

Uppers – Interesting and cute *Lemmings* derivative. ***Downers*** – It's written in AMOS, and it shows. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but it's a shame they couldn't have hired someone to program it properly. ★★

CADAVER
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeously atmospheric graphics; a good mix of puzzling and hacking. ***Downers*** – One or two irritating moments and it's all a bit lacking in the excitement department. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice blend of 3D graphics and adventuring (but it's not a classic). ★★★

CADAVER – THE PAYOFF
Renegade £16.99

Uppers – A wonderful add-on for fans of the first *Cadaver*. ***Downers*** – Not a lot of use for anyone else though. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the original, this isn't such a bad price to pay for more of the same. ★★★

CAPTAIN PLANET
Mindscape £25.99

Uppers – Um, it's ideologically sound. And the colours are nice. ***Downers*** – Terminally flawed gameplay, and seems to have been put together in a terrible hurry. ***The Bottom Line*** – No fun to play at all, and that's all that matters in the end. Forget it. ★★

THE CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN
Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably captivating and accessible strategy. ***Downers*** – Ridiculous arcade sequence dropped slap bang in the middle of the game almost totally destroys the atmosphere. ***The Bottom Line*** – Alarmingly stupid design blows what could have been a winner. ★★

CARDIAXX
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – A shoot-'em-up with the added ingredients of (a lorra, lorra) speed and a score bar right in the middle of the play area. ***Downers*** – Beyond these 'features' there's not really anything special about *Cardiaxx* at all. ***The Bottom Line*** – Its heart's in the right place, but its playability hasn't turned up to the party. ★

CELTIC LEGENDS
Ubi Soft £30.99

Uppers – Plenty of strategy plus plenty of action plus good presentation make for a more than passable role-playing challenge. ***Downers*** – The ponderous computer opponent won't break any speed records. ***The Bottom Line*** – More than enough brainstorming and hack'n'slay to keep you in jollies for ages. ★★★★★

CENTURION
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Fairly interesting management sections with some nifty battle sequences. ***Downers*** – Two appalling arcade sections blow its chances. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unbalanced. ★★

CHALLENGE GOLF
On-Line £24.99

Uppers – Easy to get into, and up to four players catered for. ***Downers*** – Mind-numbingly unrealistic putting sequence, and loads of unnecessary little bugs. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lack of playability makes this a seriously below-par golf sim. Go for *PGA Tour Golf* instead. ★

CHAMPION DRIVER
Idea £25.99

Uppers – An overhead racing game which knows its limitations, and works splendidly within them. ***Downers*** – Less frills than a frill-less thing, and isn't this a high price for this sort of thing? ***The Bottom Line*** – Very fast and slick racer, which lacks longeivity. ★★★

CHAMPION OF THE RAJ
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Arcade sequences break up the heavy-duty strategy action. ***Downers*** – Even more ridiculous disk accessing than usual in this type of thing. Crap programming generally. ***The Bottom Line*** – Potentially good game ruined by complete lack of playability. ★

CHAOS IN ANDROMEDA
On-Line £24.99

Uppers – Lots of character , interaction and plenty to do. ***Downers*** – Crap fight sequences and tiny graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enjoyable *Ultima*-style adventure slightly spoiled by sloppy programming. Still good fun though. ★★★

CHAOS STRIKES BACK
FTL (Mirrorsoft) £24.99

Uppers – Complex and ingenious puzzles; very user friendly; great sound. ***Downers*** – Slightly old fashioned looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Engrossing role playing adventure using the *Dungeon Master* game system. ★★★★

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – Visually impressive wargame, with instant appeal and plenty of user-friendly presentation. ***Downers*** – Things fall down in the wargaming aspect of things, with some rather silly rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very brave try, but it doesn't quite reach the heights to which it aspires. ★★★

CHE: GUERILLA IN BOLIVIA
CCS £25.99

Uppers – The first Che licence we've seen. ***Downers*** – A lethally average wargame. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only undemanding absolute beginners need apply. ★★

CHUCK ROCK
Core Design £24.99

Uppers – A first class caveman romp, with some innovation in the gameplay for once. ***Downers*** – A touch shallow and a touch easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Pretty brilliant platformer, one of the Amiga's very best. ★★★★

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2.0
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A veritable air force of planes to fly, with piles of options, missions and the obligatory load of external views. There's even the opportunity to fly the Space Shuttle. ***Downers*** – A complete lack of speed, bad disk access and naff perspective put a damper on the whole affair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Low flying flight sim – fails to stay with the competition. ★★★

CISCO HEAT
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – A fun driving game, with hills and junctions giving it a bit of originality. ***Downers*** – Not even slightly close to the coin-op, and the control system is abominable. ***The Bottom Line*** – Far too short to provide a decent amount of enjoyment. ★★★

COHORT
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – (Relatively) excellent graphics and helpful user-interface make things accessible. ***Downers*** – The control system isn't as good as it should be. ***The Bottom Line*** – A fine off-beat wargame, but overpriced. ★★

COMMANDO
Elite £19.99

Uppers – Lovingly recreated coin-op blast-'em scroller. The game that launched a thousand scrolling war blasters. ***Downers*** – As fashionable as an anorak. ***The Bottom Line*** – Classic stuff, but not a good indication of the Amiga's capabilities. ★★★

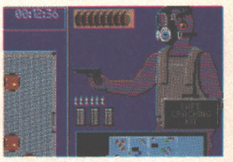
CONFLICT MIDDLE EAST
SSI/US Gold £30.99

Uppers – A wargame in the traditional sense, but surprisngly it's executed very well indeed. ***Downers*** – The wargame label is no longer a valid excuse for an Amiga program looking as dated as this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Of limited interest, even to hardened wargamers. ★★★

COUGAR FORCE
Tomahawk £19.99

Uppers – The box is quite interesting (actually that's a bit of a lie). ***Downers*** – Everything. The sound, the graphics, the gameplay – all dire in the extreme. ***The Bottom Line*** – A perfect present for pyromaniacs. ★

COVERT ACTION
MicroProse £34.99



Uppers – Lots of atmosphere and some excellent sub-games. ***Downers*** – Could have been better programmed, could have had much better controls, and could have been £10 cheaper. ***The Bottom Line*** – Surprisingly playable and enjoyable – with just a little more user-friendliness this would have been an absolute classic. ★★★

CRIME CITY
IF... £25.99

Uppers – The basic scenario of this private eye mystery does have potential as an adventure game. ***Downers*** – But the finished thing fails to generate any involvement or emotion. It comes across as if it was written by a child. ***The Bottom Line*** – Computerised interactive fiction lives or dies on its interface and its storyline, and *Crime City*'s lousy in both respects. ★

CRIME DOES NOT PAY
Titus £25.95

Uppers – Er... reasonable(ish) graphics? ***Downers*** – Terrible gameplay, pathetic humour, atrocious design, useless plot... shall we go on? I think not. ***The Bottom Line*** – Crime doesn't pay. This game is a software crime, so work it out for yourself. ★

CRIME TIME
Starbyte £25.99

Uppers – A German adventure with the added bonus of... graphics! ***Downers*** – But not very good ones, and the rest of the game is a little on the trashy side. ***The Bottom Line*** – A hideously dated, unoriginal adventure. ★

CRIME WAVE
US Gold £24.95

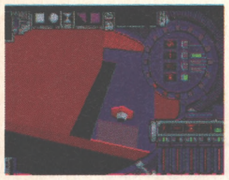
Uppers – Gore galore; the numerous video interludes spice it up a bit. ***Downers*** – The actual game is dull in the extreme, and the waiting between levels is

monstrous. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bog-standard blast-'em-up with knobs on. ★

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE
Delphine/US Gold £27.99

Uppers – Superbly-designed plot, lovely graphics, and the usual compulsive quality you expect from Delphine. ***Downers*** – Loads (and loads) of disk-accessing, and even when you've got the solution it seemingly takes eight hours to play it through to the end. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not flawless, but still an absolutely lovely game, and a worthy companion to *Monkey Island*. ★★★★

CYBERCON III
US Gold £24.99



Uppers – Brilliant sense of 'being there', and better Freescape than Freescape. ***Downers*** – Predictably, not all that accessible to your average game player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Well worth the effort of getting into. ★★★★★

DARKMAN
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – The driving section is imaginative and fun. ***Downers*** – Everything else is hackneyed, licence-by-numbers rubbish. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not quite as bad as *Total Recall* and *Nightbreed*, but not very much better either. The worst film game for quite some time. ★★

DAS BOOT
Mindscape £29.99

Uppers – The most accessible sub sim to date. ***Downers*** – ...but that still doesn't make it particularly accessible. ***The Bottom Line*** – Playable, but overpriced. The best in its field. ★★★

DEATHBRINGER
Empire £25.99

Uppers – Stunning parallax scrolling, plenty of tongue-in-cheek action and a wonderfully camp hero. ***Downers*** – Shallow hack'n'slash gameplay and dodgy collision detection. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not a lot of entertainment for a full-price game. ★★★

DEATH KNIGHTS OF KRYNN
SSI / US Gold £25.99

Uppers – A great improvement on the previous 'Krynn' role-players. ***Downers*** – But compared to the mighty *Eye Of The Beholder*, this is very average indeed. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice enough product, but nothing very spectacular. ★★★

DINO WARS
Magic Bytes £25.99

Uppers – A novel chess variant, including a great 'two players at once' option where you don't have to wait for the other player to move. ***Downers*** – The central beat-'em-up section is a bit crap, and the game as a whole is over-simplistic. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice idea, but asking £25 for it is a bit of a cheek – there just isn't enough to it. ★★

DISC
Loriciel £24.99

Uppers – A few nice graphical touches. ***Downers*** – Appallingly-designed gameplay with very little actual action. ***The Bottom Line*** – A crappy *Discs Of Tron* rip-off without most of the original's good features. ★

DISCOVERY
Micro Illusions £25.99

Uppers – Good graphics for an educational game. ***Downers*** – For a game which relies heavily on speech synthesis, the speech quality is terrible. ***The Bottom Line*** – Tricky to play and educationally dubious, this is a bit of a flop. ★★

DOUBLE DRAGON III
Storm £25.99

Uppers – Give us a minute, we'll think of something. ***Downers*** – A very bad example of a very tired genre. ***The Bottom Line*** – The beat-'em-up done just how it shouldn't be.★

DRAGON FIGHTER
Idea £25.99

Uppers – An unusual mixture of scrolling shoot-'em-up and strategy-ish bits. ***Downers*** – The strategy bits just get in the way, and the arcade bit hasn't been done justice. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slick, but insubstantial. ★★

DRAGONS OF FLAME
SSI (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Almost instant playability – not something you'd expect from a role playing game. ***Downers*** – A bit simplistic for all the real Dungeons & Dragons fans. ***The Bottom Line*** – An excellent introduction to the new bread of fantasy RPGs. ★★★

DRAGON'S LAIR II
Readysoft £44.95

Uppers – Really incredibly gorgeous cartoon graphics. ***Downers*** – Minimal player interaction and a ridiculous price tag. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not the best value game in the world. ★★

ELF
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – An excellent arcade adventure romp, with enough interesting little extras to make it fresh. ***Downers*** – These things are getting just a little bit old-fashioned, aren't they? ***The Bottom Line*** – A good solid game from the Ocean stable, but not a world beater. ★★★★

ELVIRA – THE ARCADE GAME
Flair £25.99

Uppers – A highly polished arcade adventure that's a real joy to play. ***Downers*** – There's no innovation or gameplay surprise here. ***The Bottom Line*** – A fine example of a tried'n'trusted formula. ★★★★

EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE
CDS £24.99

Uppers – A surprisingly involving footy strategy thing in the *Football Manager* vein. ***Downers*** – They're not still making these things are they? ***The Bottom Line*** – A dated idea – it sounds tedious but it's actually executed quite commendably. ★★

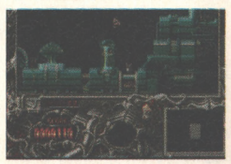
EXILE
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Real-world physics incorporated into an arcade game; it's more of a true arcade adventure than most games bearing that tag. ***Downers*** – Rather primitive graphics, and not the most instantly playable game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – A great arcade adventure, but it might not be your cup of tea if you're an action fan. Voted AMIGA POWER reviewers game of the year! ★★★★★

EXTERMINATOR
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Very original (read 'very, very odd indeed') arcade thing, well converted to retain the original's feel. ***Downers*** – Confusing initially, but once you've played it for a while it's...confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great fun, but it doesn't really make it in the longevity stakes. ★★★

THE EXECUTIONER
Hawk £25.99



Uppers – A playable enough *Thrust*-variant, with one or two extra bits tacked on (such as the tasteful torture scenes). ***Downers*** – The core of the game just isn't exciting or different enough to give *The Executioner* that 'one more go' appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine if you don't mind the slightly repetitive gameplay, and significant lack of action. ★★

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
SSI (US Gold) £29.99

Uppers – Takes *Dungeon Master* a step further. Excellent atmosphere and graphics. ***Downers*** – Despite being better than *DM*, it's not as different as it should have been. There's still room for improvement in the D&D genre. ***The Bottom Line*** – Quite possibly the best D&D game yet for the Amiga. (Or, indeed, for anything else). ★★★★★

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Graphics to make you gasp, sound effects to get your

adrenalin pumping and gameplay to leave you in a quivering heap on the floor. ***Downers*** – Despite the shoot-'em-up nature of things, it can all be a touch too much for the less ambitious games player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Quite possibly the last word in flight sims (so far, anyway). ★★★★★

FACE OFF
£25.99

Uppers – Reasonable graphics, some nice attention to detail and fairly realistic player movement. ***Downers*** – Not the game to show just how good ice hockey can be on the Amiga. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very average game, but we've yet to see any other better ice hockey efforts. ★★

FALLING JEWELS
Soft & Easy £25.99

Uppers – A nice variation on the *Klax* and *Tetris* themes. ***Downers*** – Awful exterior. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd not be badly advised to take a tumble with *Falling Jewels*. ★★★

FANTASTIC VOYAGE
Centaur £25.99

Uppers – A simple, methodical shoot-'em-up with highly atmospheric graphics. ***Downers*** – Not very hectic, and not surprising in the least. ***The Bottom Line*** – Deserves to do well. ★★★

FATE – GATES OF DAWN
Rainbow Arts £29.99

Uppers – 'Unbelievably horny women', unusual presentation and more to do than some so-called RPG games. ***Downers*** – Fiddly control and tatty presentation. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just another FRPG really, but with enough character to make it worthwhile. Far from essential though. ★★★

FINAL BLOW
Storm £25.99

Uppers – A pretty close conversion of the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Which was an absolute duffer in the first place. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not the best boxing game around (and just look at the competition!). ★

FINAL FIGHT
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – Context-sensitive controls, huge sprites, arcade-true graphics, generally an excellent conversion. ***Downers*** – Then again it's a conversion of a fairly dull, and quite dated, formulaic coin-op. And the beat-'em-up is looking a little long in the tooth these days. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically impressive and loads of fun to play, this might even knock the famous *IK+* off its 'best Amiga beat-'em-up' perch. (But then again it might not). ★★★★

FIRST SAMURAI
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Stunningly well-programmed, imaginative design and inspired use of sound, all added to a classic and proven gameplay style. ***Downers*** – Maybe just a little on the slow side. ***The Bottom Line*** – Simply gorgeous arcade adventure that you really shouldn't be without. ★★★★★

FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II
D&H £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably complex and wide-ranging strategy bash. ***Downers*** – £25 for a footie management game? Get real. ***The Bottom Line*** – Adds nothing new to the decades-old number-crunching of every other football manager game ever. ★★

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Breathtakingly detailed 3D and the finest driving feel yet seen on the Amiga. ***Downers*** – The prospect of such an accurate Grand Prix simulation isn't going to appeal to everyone. ***The Bottom Line*** – The best racing game we've ever seen, and probably the best game to appear on the Amiga. ★★★★★

4D SPORTS BOXING
Mindscape £25.99

Uppers – The best boxing game yet, with some highly original polygon graphics. ***Downers*** – Slower than you could possibly imagine, with an over-complex control system. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unusual, but not actually very playable. ★★

4D SPORTS DRIVING
Mindscape £25.99

Uppers – It's quite fun and visually impressive, with the 3D graphics fast enough to keep you on your

toes. ***Downers*** – It won't keep you enthralled for very long at the end of the day. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great for fans of the genre, but learner drivers would probably be wise to avoid. ★★

FLAMES OF FREEDOM – MIDWINTER II
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – There's loads to do, and the whole thing looks lovely. Hours of fun to be had from the character-designing section alone. ***Downers*** – Lots of stupid holes in the logic, and an uncomfortable balance between the strategy and action aspects. ***The Bottom Line*** – Works better in theory than in practice. *Midwinter* fans will love it, but the rest of us are likely to get very bored very quickly. ★★★★

FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER
Image Works £30.99

Uppers – Highly realistic and flexible (you can make it almost as simple as you want), and decent graphics too. ***Downers*** – It's not immediately attractive by any means, and the controls are even more forbidding than usual. Bugged, too. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not technically amazing, but absorbing and entertaining, with a neat two-player link-up game. ★★★★

FRENETIC
Core Design £20.99

Uppers – Fast and good-looking. ***Downers*** – You've seen this all before, and done rather more excitingly into the bargain. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slick programming only serves to make *Frenetic* tedious in a professional kind of a way. ★★

FUZZBALL
System 3 £19.99

Uppers – Big, squishy and lovable – *Fuzzball* begs to be played. Platform and puzzling styles make an intriguing cocktail. ***Downers*** – If only it was easier. Less viciousness would make all the difference. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but some irritating quirks of game design mean it falls well short of classic status. ★★★★

GAUNTLET III
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – A new angle on the arcade classic gives some novelty value, and makes proceedings

sufficiently different this time around. ***Downers*** – The pace is ponderous, there aren't enough baddies, and the speech is badly missed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine, but it doesn't really live up to the legend that is *Gauntlet*. Give us a bash on *Gauntlet 2*, anyday. ★★★

GEISHA
Tomahawk £25.99

Uppers – Um, well, you *do* get to see some girls' bits. (Sorry, female readers). ***Downers*** – Tacky and fatuous 'plot', giving way to some of the most unplayable sub-games ever, with presentation of a kind that people used to get arrested for. A nightmare all round really. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could this perhaps be the worst full-price game ever reviewed in AMIGA POWER? A five percent mark would seem to suggest so... ★

GEM'X
Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, exquisite sound, beautifully simple mental torture. ***Downers*** – Won't change your mind if you're not into puzzlers. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the best puzzle games to date. ★★★★

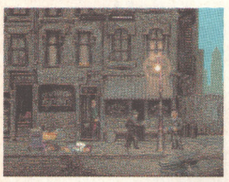
GERM CRAZY
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Not quite as expensive as Mindscape's *Life & Death*. ***Downers*** – But with little else in its favour. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another half-baked idea, not followed through properly. (Where do they all come from?) ★

GHOST BATTLE
Thalion £25.53

Uppers – The sound's quite good and the graphics are okay. ***Downers*** – Everything else is utterly awful. ***The Bottom Line*** – Badly-designed and executed *Ghosts'n'Goblins* clone that's so bad it's scary. ★

THE GODFATHER
US Gold £30.99



Uppers – Lovely to look at with plenty of good animation and rather lovely sound effects. ***Downers*** – Beneath it all it's a tedious old *RoboCop* clone. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slack and dull and lacking in challenge. Avoid. ★★

GODS
Renegade £25.53

Uppers – Lovely aesthetics, quite involved for a platform game. ***Downers*** – Not quite as good as it's made out to be. And those graphics are far too clever for their own good. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't believe the hype, but pretty damn good all the same. ★★★★

GOLDEN EAGLE
Loriciel £28.99

Uppers – Nice character animation, and a suitably French price. ***Downers*** – There's no gameplay to speak of. ***The Bottom Line*** – Uninspired, uninnovative, uninteresting, and unaddictive. ★★

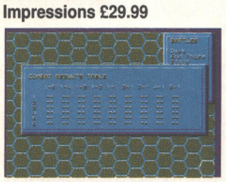
GRAND PRIX MASTER
Dinamic £19.95

Uppers – Endorsed by Jorge Martinez (apparently famous on the 80cc motorcycle circuit). ***Downers*** – Handles like a Reliant Robin. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not to put too fine a point on it, useless. ★

GRAEME SOUNESS VECTOR SOCCER
Impulze £25.99

Uppers – Innovative 3D graphics and some spectacular replays. ***Downers*** – It just doesn't work as a game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Plays like Gazza with both his knees knackered. ★★

GREAT NAPOLEONIC BATTLES
Impressions £29.99



Uppers – Includes a wargame editor. ***Downers*** – The wargame part is actually very average indeed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Worth buying for the editor, if you're really into that sort of thing. ★★★

GUNBOAT
Accolade £29.99

Uppers – A sim which actually does something different. ***Downers*** – The action doesn't really convey enough excitement, and the graphics are a little on the primitive side. ***Bottom Line*** – A highly complex sim, this takes quite some time to get drawn into. ★★★

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE
Kingsoft £25.99

Uppers – A good rendition of the Hagar character, and an engaging enough game behind the licence. ***Downers*** – It's not really any better than Hi-Tec's *Scooby & Scrabby* (which is a helluvalot cheaper). ***The Bottom Line*** – Not bad at all. But nothing very spectacular either. ★★★

HALLS OF MONTEZUMA
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Almost unlimited lastability, thanks to the huge numbers of scenarios. ***Downers*** – Off-puttingly complicated, and offers nothing new to the unconverted. ***Bottom Line*** – Well put together, but still strictly for diehards. ★★

HAMMERFIST
Activision £24.99

Uppers – Graphically adept arcade adventure with tons of playability and plenty to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Iffy sound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Thoroughly enjoyable (if you like that sort of thing). ★★★

HARLEQUIN
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Humdinging platform game. Beautiful graphics, exquisite gameplay, loads of depth, and it's positively brimming with imagination. Well presented too. Out *Robocod*'s *Robocod*. ***Downers*** – The size of the task may be too much for the weak willed. (Some downer, huh?) ***The Bottom Line*** –The more you play this game the better it gets. A classic. ★★★★★

HARPOON (WITH BATTLESET 2)
Electronic Arts £34.99

Uppers – Realistic, incredibly detailed naval wargame with specifications and performance figures all over the place. ***Downers***– As you might expect, it's poorly presented, and terribly slow. Put aside plenty of time for manual studying. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lots of boating fun, but too expensive and badly programmed for anyone other than an enthusiast. ★★★

HEART OF THE DRAGON
Avatar Computing £25.99

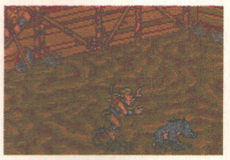
Uppers – Lots of colours, and an (almost serious) attempt to do something new with the fantasy beat-'em-up. ***Downers*** – Beyond the almost impressive technical trickery lies not very much at all really. ***The Bottom Line*** – If your friend has bought it, give it a go. Then laugh very heartily at him. Entertaining in an embarrassing sort of way. ★

HEARTS OF CHINA
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Beautiful painted backdrops, with enough relevance and animation to make them justifiable, and a pretty sensible control system make it an enjoyable

Far East romp. ***Downers*** – Lack of speed and the need for one meg and a hard drive, plus a lack of real plot flexibility. ***The Bottom Line*** – Sierra are carving themselves a niche with this sort of thing. Neat. ★★★★

HEIMDALL
Core Design £30.99



Uppers – Stunningly pretty and atmospheric, and it's absolutely enormous too. The cartoon-style is just gorgeous. ***Downers*** – Some nasty disk swapping and accessing, though not quite to Cinemaware 'standards'. ***The Bottom Line*** – A fast-moving and slick RPG game that's miles more accessible than the genre usually is. A winner. ★★★★★

HERO QUEST
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Easy to get into, and deceptively addictive. You don't think you've been playing it for long, but suddenly it's Thursday and you're a week late for dinner. ***Downers*** – Not so good as a one-player game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps surprisingly, a highly entertaining game, and absolutely ideal when you've got game-playing friends round. ★★★★

HERO QUEST: RETURN OF THE WITCHLORD
Gremlin £14.99

Uppers – An add-on module for fans of the original *Hero Quest* who want to take their characters into harder territory. ***Downers*** – Not a lot of use to anybody else, but that's a bit inevitable. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you liked *Hero Quest*, then this is an obvious (and fairly inexpensive) purchase. ★★★★

HILL STREET BLUES
Krisalis £24.99

Uppers – A good feel for the TV series; characters (both player and others) that you can identify with. It's certainly an interesting way to handle a licence. ***Downers*** – Gets repetitive pretty quickly, and it's not the slickest game around. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good next step for someone who's played *Sim City* to death and fancies a new challenge. Limited appeal, though. ★★★

HOME ALONE
Accolade £24.99

Uppers – The box can be used for darts practice. ***Downers*** – Atrocious gameplay, jerky graphics and terrible sound. ***The Bottom Line*** – A ludicrously unenjoyable film licence. Don't disappoint yourself.★

HUDSON HAWK
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – A film licence which actually stands up as a game in its

own right. ***Downers*** – The control system can reduce some to tears, and it doesn't match *The Blues Brothers* in the arcade adventure/platform stakes. ***The Bottom Line*** – A well produced, but infuriatingly difficult, game. Try before you buy. ★★★★

HUNTER
Activision £25.99

Uppers – Stunning 3D graphics and loads to do. ***Downers*** – The odd little graphical glitch or two. ***Bottom Line*** – Enormously absorbing game – you'll find yourself completely captivated by it for hours on end. ★★★★★

INDIANA JONES ADVENTURE
US Gold £19.99

Uppers – More fine-tuning gives *Indy* the friendliest control system yet. It's pretty faithful to the movie too! ***Downers*** – Waiting for Indy to trek across the screen all the time can get annoying and some of the puzzles are just a wee bit too abstract. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the best Amiga adventures available. ★★★★

INDIANAPOLIS 500
Electronic Arts £24.95

Uppers – An immensely playable blend of true racing sim and quick track blast, with a nice line in remote camera views (if you've got a 1 meg machine). ***Downers*** – Track repetition hinders lasting appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just fabulous. ★★★★★

INDY HEAT
Storm £25.99

Uppers – Well, it's an alrightish conversion of this *Super Sprint*-style coin-op, speedy and playable. ***Downers*** – Little real depth though, and you can buy similar on budget. ***The Bottom Line*** – We can't really say anything great about it, but neither is it a complete waste of money or time. Best if you play it against a bunch of friends★★★

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS
Hawk £25.99

Uppers – Tons of fun for those who miss the days of joystick waggling. ***Downers*** – Terrible presentation, and a highly questionable price. ***The Bottom Line*** – If only it had been a tenner cheaper... ★★★

I PLAY 3D SOCCER
Simulmondo £25.99

Uppers – The most dynamic and visually convincing representation of the sport yet. ***Downers*** – The realism is so high that you hardly ever get to kick the ball, and the 3D display system can be downright confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately flawed. ★★

IRON LORD
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Cinemaware-style medieval epic with plenty of sub-games and atmospheric presentation. ***Downers*** – It's just too tough for most, and with little real depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ultimately repetitive, but fun for a while. ★★

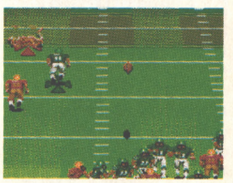
JAHANGIR KHAN'S CHAMPIONSHIP SQUASH
Krisalis £25.53

Uppers – Easy to play, closely adheres to the rules of the real thing, and there're plenty of options on offer. ***Downers*** – There's not really a lot you can do with a squash game, is there? ***The Bottom Line*** – The best squash game around for the Amiga. (Not that there's much in the way of competition). ★★★

JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Stunning 3D camera-style view on the action, and the actual rules and physical mechanics of the game are re-created beautifully. ***Downers*** – Well, it's still only snooker. Some extra stats would have been nice too. ***Bottom Line*** – A veritable corker. A classic. A 90 percenter. Need we say more? ★★★★★

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL
Electronic Arts £25.99



Uppers – Superb graphics and sound are merely the icing on the cake of a superbly thought out sports game – and one with enough (two player) variety to keep you going for years. One of the classic Amiga sports sims. ***Downers*** – The computer opponents soon prove to be a walkover, so in the long run enjoyment is limited to two-player action. Plenty of people can't grasp the basics of American Football either, and they're needed here. ***The Bottom Line*** – A near-perfect conversion of a game that was voted (in it's original console incarnation) 1990's 'videogame of the year'. It plays as good as it looks. ★★★★★

JUDGE DREDD
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Two ancient sub-games offer a real rave from the grave. ***Downers*** – Another *Judge Dredd* game screwed up totally.

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No humour, no graphics, no game. ***The Bottom Line*** – One day somebody will do justice (ahem) to the legend of Dredd. One day. ★

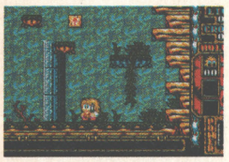
JUPITER'S MASTERDRIVE
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Surprisingly playable race game. More fun than a packet of Jammy Dodgers. ***Downers*** – Unspectacular and overpriced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not sure why, but it really is jolly good fun. ★★

KEEF THE THIEF
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellent hack, slash and puzzle solving with some superb stylised graphics. ***Downers*** – It still plays like your average role-playing adventure. ***The Bottom Line*** – Respectable Tolkien-esque fare. ★★★

KID GLOVES 2
Millennium £25.99

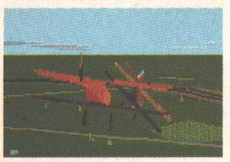


Uppers – Ther're plenty of *Super Wonder Boy* influences in there. ***Downers*** – It's got nothing to do with the original *Kid Gloves*, and it's just no fun anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – A waste of a good name, and a very poor deal. ★★

KNIGHTMARE
Mindscape £30.99

Uppers – The *Captive* system given a more appropriate fantasy setting. More compact too. ***Downers*** – Not enough thought put into the concept, and the difficulty is pitched all wrong. ***The Bottom Line*** – It feels too much like role-playing by numbers. ★★★

KNIGHTS OF THE SKY
MicroProse £34.99



Uppers – Accessible and enjoyable to play, in a not-very-flight-simmy kind of way. ***Downers*** – Erm, well, there aren't quite as many buttons as some flight sims. ***The Bottom Line*** – Much more playable than you might expect, this is the surprise hit of the year in the AMIGA POWER office. ★★★★★

THE KILLING CLOUD
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Fast-moving and pretty graphics, bags of depth, and a great creation of atmosphere. ***Downers*** – Riddled with inconsistencies. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a contender, but badly lets itself down in the logic stakes. ★★★

KING'S BOUNTY
New World Computing £25.99

Uppers – Accessible and tidily presented, and far more playable for the non-expert than anything in this field we've seen. ***Downers*** – Nothing beyond the fact that some people won't ever get to grips with this sort of game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Superb D&D-style adventure that's fun for everyone but the most narrow of mind. ★★★★

KING'S QUEST V
Sierra £39.99

Uppers – Beautiful digitised graphics and a very friendly point and click interface. ***Downers*** – The price is one obvious downside, and only hard drive owners should bother. ***The Bottom Line*** – A mighty impressive adventure, which takes Sierra to new heights. ★★★★

LAST NINJA 2
System 3 £24.99

Uppers – Excellent 3D isometric graphics and a genuine attempt to inject some strategy into the martial arts genre. ***Downers*** – The game just isn't cohesive, and it plays like a pig. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not really in the Bruce Lee league (barely scraping Jackie Chan level to be honest). ★★

LANCASTER
Actual Screenshots £24.95

Uppers – Fairly impressive 3D polygon graphics. ***Downers*** – Lack of variation and any real excitement means it barely gets off the ground. ***The Bottom Line*** – Elevates averageness to an art form. ★★

LAST NINJA 3
System 3 £25.99

Uppers – Polished presentation and big improvements in look, feel and plot in the ninja's third outing. ***Downers*** – A diabolical control system and one or two flaws in execution prove major irritations. ***The Bottom Line*** – For those who go for these beat-'em-up adventures, *Last Ninja 3* is heaven sent. Others will wish to give it a wide berth. ★★★★

LEANDER
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Slice after mouthwatering slice of smooth platform action. A sizeable and endearing exercise in coolness. ***Downers*** – Shallow as hell. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ultimately a limited romp, what it lacks in inspiration it makes up for in perspiration. ★★★★

LEISURE SUIT LARRY III
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Ridiculous, over-sexed plot. Adventuring for consenting adults. ***Downers*** – Slightly obtrusive command parser, and as usual it's over-priced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Check it out – but only if you are over eighteen. ★★★

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 5
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Well, it's got a jolly cocktail lounge-style soundtrack which sets off the sleaze quite well. ***Downers*** – The action is slow, the puzzles are illogical and it's all just very disappointing. Little real sex in it either. ***The Bottom Line*** – If it's titillation you want buy the Sunday Sport. ★

LEMMINGS
Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Utterly bizarre, pleasingly original and totally addictive. Invents a totally new category – the save-'em-up. ***Downers*** – As is the norm with such strikingly original concepts, some may wonder just what all the fuss is about. ***The Bottom Line*** – Love it or loathe it, you can't ignore it. *Lemmings* rule. ★★★★★

LIFE AND DEATH
Mindscape £25.53

Uppers – Excellent packaging (the surgical mask and gloves are wild), and some fairly amusing gameplay keep things on the boil for a couple of hours. ***Downers*** – Repetition soon sets in – as a long-term challenge it all falls apart quite alarmingly. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is quite good, but there's just not enough of it. ★★

LIVING JIGSAWS
Miles Computing £24.99

Uppers – Likely to appeal to the younger Amiga users. ***Downers*** – Unlikely to appeal to anybody else, anywhere. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lacks any charm whatsoever. Quite silly and pointless all round, really. ★

LOGICAL
Rainbow Arts £19.99

Uppers – The ease of play makes this a nicely accessible puzzler. ***Downers*** – But the amount of time each move takes also makes it a seriously tedious one. ***The Bottom Line*** – In a crowded world of puzzle games, *Logical* is very blunt in the mustard area. ★★

LORD OF THE RINGS
Electronic Arts £29.99

Uppers – A brilliant command system and excellent evocation of Tolkien's classic story. ***Downers*** – Everything is simply too slow and vast. Surely it could have been programmed better than this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Some great ideas, but the game just over-stretches itself. A shame. ★★★

LORDS OF CHAOS
Blade £24.99

Uppers – Great control system, comprehensive and logical. Lots of levels equal great lastability. ***Downers*** – Very little action; not much compulsion to reach your rather abstract goal. ***The Bottom Line*** – A disappointing game from Julian Gollop, not up to his usual standard. Wait for *Laser Squad 2*. ★★★

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE II
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, lashings of speed and that hard-to-capture driving atmosphere. ***Downers*** – The lack of crashes is a bit silly, and some track maps would have helped. ***The Bottom Line*** – The best sprite-based driving game we've seen. ★★★★★

LUPO ALBERTO
Idea £25.53

Uppers – Charming characters, a terribly translated manual, and goofy gameplay make it ideal for kids of all ages. ***Downers*** – The animation is funny for all the wrong reasons. Loveable but really rather crap. ***The Bottom Line*** – A game sure to cause argument. A case of try before you buy. ★★

MAGIC GARDEN
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – An outlandish (and gnomish) *Sim City*-ish kind of thing (sort of). ***Downers*** – Is there any demand for this sort of thing? ***The Bottom Line*** – For a game which is based around gardening, you just can't see the wood for the twee. ★★

MAGIC POCKETS
Renegade £25.99

Uppers – The usual Bitmap standards of technical excellence, and a veritable mountain of clever ideas. ***Downers*** – The graphics don't suit the game style, the design is too clever for its own good, and the pacing is hopelessly wrong. ***The Bottom Line*** – It'll sell a million, but everyone we've met finds it seriously boring. As a cute arcade platform game it's a disaster. ★★★

MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE
Krisalis £25.99

Uppers – Fast, pretty, and hugely playable. ***Downers*** – The strategy section is largely superficial (and what there is is optional). ***Bottom Line*** – Great control makes this just about the best football sim so far. ★★★★

MAUPITI ISLAND
Lankhor £25.99

Uppers – Pleasantly different, with loads of character interaction. ***Downers*** – Just too small to really justify the price. ***Bottom Line*** – Charming and interesting, but there just isn't enough of it. ★★★

MEGA LO MANIA
Image Works £30.99

Uppers – Brilliant sound effects, gorgeous speech, jolly nice graphics, completely compulsive gameplay. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a tad frustrating at times. ***The Bottom Line*** – The most accessible and arguably the most enjoyable god-sim to date. ★★★★★

MEGA TRAVELLER 1
Empire £30.64

Uppers – Terrifying depth, friendly and helpful controls, great atmosphere, excellent balance of strategy and action. ***Downers*** – It might all seem a bit too familiar to *Elite* players; occasional long disk-access pauses can irritate. ***The Bottom Line*** – A wonderful piece of role-playing software that everyone should play at least once. After that, you're unlikely to want to stop. ★★★★

MERCENARY III
Novagen £29.99

Uppers – Six different solutions, lots to explore and plenty of plot. ***Downers*** – The 3D graphics couldn't look much more dated and the gameplay is thinner than the atmosphere on an asteroid. ***The Bottom Line*** – A rather average game, both in play and looks. ★★

MERCS
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Faithful conversion of the coin-op, good-looking and fast-moving... ***Downers*** – ...but still just another *Commando* clone. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great at what it does, but you're likely to want rather more from a game in this day and age. ★★★

METAL MUTANT
Silmarils £25.99

Uppers – A simple concept (exploration, fighting and puzzle solving) which works well, and has a perfect difficulty curve. ***Downers*** – Lacks any really exciting features, and too simple for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – A middle-of-the-road game, which achieves what it sets out to do, but doesn't really astound. ★★★

MICROPROSE GOLF
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Looks wonderful, and just about every conceivable variation of golf is covered. ***Downers*** – Seriously overpriced, can be a bit uninvolving, and the graphical 'fog' is unfortunate and disappointing. ***The Bottom Line*** – A great golf game which just fails to match up to the standard set by *PGA Tour*. ★★★★

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well-balanced gameplay with a smooth difficulty curve makes it stand out from a hundred similar coin-op conversions. Actually more playable than the arcade original. ***Downers*** – Control is awkward at first; could be a touch faster. ***The Bottom Line*** – Best of its type. ★★★

MIGHTY BOMB JACK
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Classic gameplay with added 16-bit features like, erm, power-ups. ***Downers*** – Sprawling levels lose the original's frantic urgency. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull, dull, and then again dull. Did we mention it was dull? ★

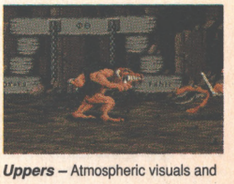
MIG-29
Domark £29.99

Uppers – So real you'll be be hanging pictures of Gorby on your wall. ***Downers*** – Only five missions, with little in the way of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately just too techie for most Amiga owners. ★★★

MIG-29M SUPER FULCRUM
Domark £39.99

Uppers – For the serious minded flight sim fans, *MiG29M* offers a superior trip, which manages to avoided cloning its predecessor. ***Downers*** – Way short of its competitors in areas such as ground detail and instant action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Expensive, but fans of the original won't be disappointed. ★★★★

MOONSTONE
Mindscape £30.99



Uppers – Atmospheric visuals and sound effects create a spooky game world. ***Downers*** – There's not

enough of anything. Awkward disk accessing breaks the flow of the game too. ***The Bottom Line*** – A simple, arguably mediocre game, hidden beneath glossy presentation. ★★★

MONOPOLY
Leisure Genius £19.99

Uppers – A faithful version of the classic (to say the least) board-game. ***Downers*** – Who the hell wants to play a board-game on their computer anyway? ***The Bottom Line*** – Competently done, but arguably quite pointless. ★★

MONSTER BUSINESS
Eclipse £19.99

Uppers – Tons of character and classically simple *Dig Dug*-meets-*Snow Bros* gameplay make this endless fun for nostalgic arcade fans. Great music too, and a halfway-decent price tag. ***Downers*** – Once more, 'simple arcade fun' translates directly as 'shallow and transient kiddie rubbish' for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – A superb arcade platform game with more life in it than a hundred copies of *Magic Pockets*. ★★★★

MOONBASE
Mindscape £35.99

Uppers – Entertaining and addictive game in the best *Sim City* tradition. ***Downers*** – Just a bit too close to *Sim City* for comfort, though. ***Bottom Line*** – Fairly short-term entertainment, and more than a touch overpriced. ★★★

MOONSHINE RACERS
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Erm, great hillbilly music. ***Downers*** – Slow, graphically horrible, totally derivative. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as bad as Amiga *Chase HQ*, and you've got to admit that's pretty damn bad. ★

NAVY SEALS
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – Quite good fun in a mindless arcade runaround sort of way. ***Downers*** – Technically unimpressive (to say the least), and there's very little to it. ***Bottom Line*** – Looks like an ST port, but if you can forget you paid £25 for it, it's pretty enjoyable. ★★

NAPOLEON 1
Internecine £29.99

Uppers – Historically accurate and all that kind of stuff – Boney fanatics will love it. ***Downers*** – ...but everyone else will be left completely cold. There's no attempt made to make the game accessible, it's purely for those who already know they're going to buy it before they ever see the thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you don't love the concept immediately, give this an extra-wide berth. ★★

NEBULUS 2 – POGO A-GO-GO
21st Century Entertainment £25.99

Uppers – The winning formula of the original is at the core of the game. ***Downers*** – The addition of power ups ruins the beautiful simplicity which made the first such a classic. ***The Bottom Line*** – A real waste. This is the worst kind of sequel, one which just regurgitates the ideas of its predecessor, but in a far less playable way. ★★

NECRONOM
Linel £25.99

Uppers – Behind all the technical boasting lies a groovy little blaster. ***Downers*** – It's not going to win any awards, and it's impossible without autofire. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not bad for real shoot-'em-up freaks. ★★★★

THE NEVERENDING STORY II
Linel £25.99

Uppers – There're several sub-games for your money, and the licence is ideal subject material. ***Downers*** – Exactly how not to do a film licence. ***The Bottom Line*** – You can do much better than this. ★★

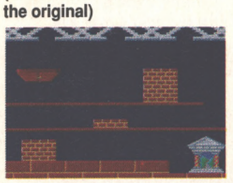
NINJA WARRIORS
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Novel 'Cinemascope'-esque screen layout. Dynamic Loading System is a boon but doesn't get rid of irritating swapping. ***Downers*** – Extremely repetitive action palls quickly. ***The Bottom Line*** – Even for a game of this type, the gameplay is too limited to hold the attention for any length of time. ★★

OBITUS
Psygnosis £34.99

Uppers – Intro would make a great Amiga *Deathchase* game. ***Downers*** – *Obitus* itself is a dull *Dungeon Master* rip-off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Boring and ridiculously priced. ★★

OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS!
Psygnosis £25.99 (or £19.99 as an add-on for the original)



Uppers – The same classic game it always was. ***Downers*** – Where's the imagination that gave *Lemmings* its character in the first place? ***The Bottom Line*** – A missed opportunity, but still a brilliant game. ★★★★

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Utterly mindless genocidal slaughterfest; perhaps the best *Op Wolf* style game to date. ***Downers*** – More of the coin-op's appeal is down to the cabinet-mounted Uzi than you might think, leaving the Amiga version somewhat 'flat'. ***The Bottom Line*** – Everything you could expect a conversion of *Operation Thunderbolt* to be. ★★★

OUTRUN EUROPA
US Gold £24.95

Uppers – A vast improvement on earlier *OutRun* games, the use of different vehicles adding spice. ***Downers*** – The driving feel isn't as good as it might have been and the levels aren't sufficiently different. ***The Bottom Line*** – A class driving act, but its fails to compete with the likes of *Lotus II*. ★★★★

PGA GOLF COURSE DISK
Electronic Arts £14.99

Uppers – Well, it's an add-on disk. You can't deny it gives you three new real life tournament courses for *PGA Tour Golf*. ***Downers*** – You can't really deny that's all there is to it either – the lack of new features to see, new control methods to try out, or anything else new at all really – is a bit of a disappointment. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'll have great fun with it if this is all you want. ★★★

PGA TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellently presented, comprehensive, and easy as pie to get into. ***Downers*** – There's a limited amount of scope to any golf game, and *PGA* doesn't even try to transcend it. ***The Bottom Line*** – The pinnacle of Amiga golf so far. ★★★★★

PEGASUS
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Two different genres for your money – *Rastan*-type slasher and *R-Type*-ish shoot-'em-up. ***Downers*** – Neither game style is very well executed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unexciting and generally totally average game seriously lacking in character. ★★★

PIT-FIGHTER
Domark £24.99

Uppers – Interesting and distinctive looking beat-'em-up. ***Downers*** – The 3D effect and digitised sprites aren't entirely convincing, and gameplay is very shallow. ***The Bottom Line*** – A close conversion of a pretty thin arcade game. ★★

POLICE QUEST 2
Sierra (Activision) £34.95

Uppers – Er, very realistic sim of a policeman's lot. ***Downers*** – ie half the game is form-filling. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too much like a tedious day at the office. ★★

POPULOUS II
Electronic Arts £29.99

Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, more options and variety than before, and superbly paced action. ***Downers*** – It's really not all that different from

the first game at all, more of a serious update than anything else. ***The Bottom Line*** – An absolutely wonderful game, the only flaw in which is the similarity to its predecessor. If you didn't buy *Populous*, though, don't even think about missing this. ★★★★★

POPULOUS WORLD EDITOR
Electronic Arts £14.99

Uppers – The ability to customise the classic *Populous* game. ***Downers*** – There's only really so much to be done with it. ***The Bottom Line*** – As far as editors go, this one does the job well enough. ★★★

PP HAMMER AND HIS PNEUMATIC WEAPON
Demonware £25.53

Uppers – Nicely old-fashioned platform action. Plenty of scope for double entrendres too. ***Downers*** – Annoying niggles and a tendency towards over-complication spoil it a bit. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but it could easily have been a lot better. ★★★

PREHISTORIK
Titus £25.53

Uppers – Some excellent cartoon graphics and humorous touches make it an instantly likeable game. ***Downers*** – Suffers in comparison to *Toki* and *Chuck Rock*. Needs a number of rough edges polishing up. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice enough little caveman romp, but it's not really an essential purchase. ★★★

PRINCE OF PERSIA
Broderbund £24.99

Uppers – Phenomenal animation, loads of atmosphere and some good old-fashioned gameplay. ***Downers*** – Control is initially tricky, and getting sent to the start of a level every time you die is always annoying. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically stunning and great fun at the same time. Why can't all games be like this? ★★★★★

PROFLIGHT
Hi Soft £39.95

Uppers – Terrifyingly accurate – possibly the most accurate flight simulator ever. ***Downers*** – Such a good simulator that there isn't really room for any game at all. ***Bottom Line*** – Miles too realistic to be any fun to play. Still, it's less expensive than a real flying lesson. ★★

PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Possibly the most realistic sports sim to grace the Amiga, with features galore. ***Downers*** – So if you hate the real thing, you won't go for this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Nothing short of wonderful. ★★★★

PURSUIT TO EARTH
Exocet £19.95

Uppers – Reminiscent of *Gyruss*, the classic arcade zapper. ***Downers*** – But completely crap. ***The Bottom Line*** – About as much fun as getting hit by a real Exocet. ★

QUEST FOR GLORY II – TRIAL BY FIRE
Sierra £40.85

Uppers – Sorry, can't think of any. Oh no, wait, you *do* get lots of disks for your money. ***Downers*** – But no game to put on them. Incompetently programmed, dreadfully-designed, staggeringly-overpriced trash. ***The Bottom Line*** – Possibly the worst Amiga fantasy role-playing game you will ever see. Avoid it like an bad-tempered tiger with toothache. ★

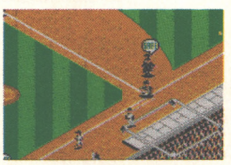
RAILROAD TYCOON
MicroProse £29.99

Uppers – Frightening amount of depth. ***Downers*** – Very slow to get into (and very slow even when you *do* get into it). ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a lot of time to invest in it, well worth a look. *Sim City* is still the better of the two, though. ★★★★

RALLY CROSS CHALLENGE
Anco £19.95

Uppers – Well-programmed *Super Sprint* clone that's great fun with multiple players. ***Downers*** – Limited lastability. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best in its field, but that's more down to lack of competition than anything else. ★★

RBI TWO BASEBALL
Domark £29.99



Uppers – Excellent simulation of baseball, and beautifully presented to boot. ***Downers*** – Over-priced and not all that hot on lasting appeal. ***Bottom Line*** – Very good, but a bit limited, and not quite a classic. ★★★★

REALMS
Virgin £29.99

Uppers – An interesting and slickly presented variation on the *Kingdoms* theme. The great battle sequences really make the game. ***Downers*** – There can be just too much routine realm-keeping. ***The Bottom Line*** – It'll take a little getting used to, but basically a terrific game. ★★★★

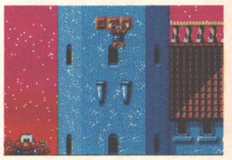
RENEGADE LEGION INTERCEPTOR
SSI/US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Military hardware a-go-go gives it instant RPG appeal. ***Downers*** – The strategy isn't deep enough, and the action sequences are way out of date. ***Bottom Line*** – Tales of galactic empires and warfare are a good idea, but this one just falls flat. ★

RISE OF THE DRAGON
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Atmospheric Blade Runner-style first-person adventure which combines digitised photos and comic-book presentation. ***Downers*** – Another hard drive game, and its not the most complex adventure ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, different and involving. ★★★★

ROBOCOD
Millennium £24.99



Uppers – Wit, console-style graphics and gameplay hide behind a barrage of visual jokes and puns. ***Downers*** – Perhaps it could have been a little 'tighter'. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as impressive as *Rainbow Islands*! ★★★★★

ROBOCOP 3
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – Some of the best 3D driving and shoot-'em-up action yet. It sets unprecedented standards for this sort of thing. ***Downers*** – Though large, there isn't as much here as a good number of 3D games. ***The Bottom Line*** – Impressive and deservedly a great success. ★★★★★

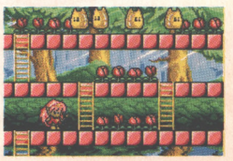
ROBIN HOOD
Millennium £25.99

Uppers – Witty and cheerful game that makes you love it almost in spite of itself. ***Downers*** – Tiny graphics can get irritating, and there are lots of silly little quirks. ***The Bottom Line*** – Likeable game that's a long way short of classic status, but damn good fun all the same. ★★★★

ROBOZONE
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Three totally different elements (*Killing Game Show* variant, *Dungeon Master* style sub-game, and *R-Type*-esque scroller) in one game... ***Downers*** – ...none of which are done at all well. ***The Bottom Line*** – Overpriced as a budget game (nice front-end sequence though). ★

RODLAND
Storm £25.99



Uppers – Too-cute-to-be-true graphics, wonderful presentation, a

near-perfect arcade game in the traditional sense. ***Downers –*** If you're looking for depth and complexity, look somewhere else. ***The Bottom Line –*** A magnificent conversion that actually improves significantly on the original coin-op. Lovable and extremely addictive, you couldn't ask for a better platform arcade game. ★★★★★

ROLLING RONNY
Virgin £25.99

Uppers – Cute, console-style graphics and easy-to-grasp platform gameplay give *Ronny* instant appeal. ***Downers –*** Beneath the varnish lies not very much at all. ***The Bottom Line –*** A very plain game which offers nothing new to Amiga gamers. ★★

R-TYPE II
Activision £25.99

Uppers – 99 percent arcade-perfect, and a beautiful and addictive shoot-'em-up in its own right. ***Downers –*** A couple of tiny bugs, and maybe off-puttingly difficult. (For wimps, anyway). ***Bottom Line –*** The best space blast for the Amiga yet, and possibly the best coin-op conversion too. Superb. ★★★★★

RUGBY COACH
D & H Games £24.99

Uppers – It makes a change from football coach games. ***Downers –*** But it's not exactly drastically different from them. ***The Bottom Line –*** There's nothing funadamentally wrong with it, except that it's a management game. ★★

RUGBY – THE WORLD CUP
Domark £25.99

Uppers – Fast, slick and frenetic action, and brilliant as a two-player game. ***Downers –*** Sacrifices a lot of realism in the quest for flowing play, like penalties for a start. ***The Bottom Line –*** An excellent rendition of the sport which puts playability before authenticity to great effect. ★★★★★

SARAKON
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Brilliant *Shanghai*-inspired gameplay make this a strategy classic, and the price is a nice surprise. ***Downers –*** Slightly indistinct symbols can occasionally confuse matters. ***The Bottom Line –*** A supremely addictive puzzler, in the finest 'takes over your entire life' tradition. ★★★★

SEARCH FOR THE KING
Accolade £34.99

Uppers – Superb Elvis gags and attention to detail (particularly in the lovingly-created graphics) mean graphic adventure fans will take to it immediately. ***Downers –*** Accolade blow it to a certain extent with their inefficient parser system. ***The Bottom Line –*** Still a long way to go before it competes with the likes of the mighty *Monkey Island.* ★★★

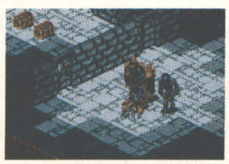
THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – The closest thing yet to a fully interactive story. Enormous playability, pleasing puzzles and great dollops of – yes! – genuinely witty humour come together to form something very glorious (and very different) indeed. ***Downers –*** Despite the five disks, you'll still need a full meg of ram, and once the game is completed you'll probably never come back to it again. ***The Bottom Line –*** An adventure that looks and plays better than almost any arcade game. Sheer software heaven. Destined for all-time classic status. ★★★★★

7 COLOURS
Infogrames £19.99

Uppers – Interesting Othello-based concept. ***Downers –*** Useless documentation, terrible music, and relies too heavily on luck for a board game. ***The Bottom Line –*** More or less okay for the first few hours, but rapidly gets horribly boring. ★★

SHADOWLANDS
Domark £29.99



Uppers – An isometric 3D RPG game with a pleasant lack of statistics, some neat game design, and a 'revolutionary' light-and-darkness system, which actually manages to include whether you can see anything or not in the mechanics of the game. ***Downers –*** Rough graphics, minimal sound, crap scrolling – it's never going to compete with arcade games for instant kicks. ***The Bottom Line –*** It's not exactly fast, and it's not the best looking thing around, but a quick play will reveal that it's actually damn absorbing stuff. A winner, surprisingly. ★★★★

SHADOW SORCERER
US Gold £27.99

Uppers – Very different to the usual SSI orc-slashing fare. ***Downers –*** Disjointed plot and badly thought-out playing system means it never really gets going. ***The Bottom Line –*** Neither as playable as *Hero Quest* or as hardcore as *Eye Of The Beholder, Shadow Sorceror* falls uncomfortably between two stools. ★★★

SHANGHAI
Activision £19.99

Uppers – Based on an ancient Chinese tile game, so you know it's going to torture your mind, and it does. Friendly presentation too, and the multi-player against-the-clock games are action-packed enough for the most frenzied blasting fan. ***Downers –*** Slightly fiddly graphics can play havoc with your eyes. ***The Bottom Line –*** Scarily gripping for a game with no moving graphics. The first time you do it you'll want to take out an advert in The Times to tell everybody. ★★★★★

SILENT SERVICE 2
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Engrossing and accurate simulation that could well take over your life. ***Downers –*** If you're not into military strategy, this has little chance of changing your mind. ***The Bottom Line –*** All you sub fans (yes, you!) will know what to expect, so dive in. ★★★★

THE SIMPSONS
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A good licence AND a good game. Brilliant console-like scrolling arcade platform sort of thing. ***Downers –*** The main game doesn't really rely on the Simpsons theme, and a bit too complicated for Bart's younger fans. ***The Bottom Line –*** The licence of the year, quite probably. ★★★★

SKULL AND CROSSBONES
Domark £24.99

Uppers – It's all reasonably true to the coin-op. ***Downers –*** Pity it was so crap then, isn't it? ***The Bottom Line –*** You'd have more fun being keelhauled.★

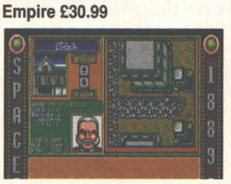
SLIDERS
Palace £25.99

Uppers – Clean 3D isometric graphics, with loads of sporting and *Marble Madness* overtones thrown in for good measure. ***Downers –*** The result is frankly less enjoyable than it sounds. ***The Bottom Line –*** Buy yourself *Spindizzy Worlds* or *Speedball 2* instead. ★★

SMASH TV
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – At last – an Amiga version of the classic arcade game. A lifetime of gross-out ultraviolence awaits. ***Downers –*** It's a cut-down interpretation of the arcade original. ***The Bottom Line –*** A disappointment, but still a damn good game. ★★★★

SPACE 1889
Empire £30.99



Uppers – Another fine game in the *MegaTraveller* mould, with a a wonderfully imaginative plot. ***Downers –*** A touch too complicated and getting started is a pain. ***The Bottom Line –*** If it's your thing, it's worth a go. ★★★

SPACE ACE II – BORF'S REVENGE
Empire £34.99

Uppers – It looks pretty, and it's moderately entertaining for the first three minutes. ***Downers –*** You'll finish it inside three hours and you'll hate it so much you'll never want to

see it again. ***The Bottom Line –*** Disjointed, ridiculously small, gameplay-free, stupendously priced, immensly frustrating. Complete trash. ★

SPEEDBALL II
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – The ultimate future sport game to date – fast, brutal, enormously playable. The Bitmaps' finest moment. ***Downers –*** Teams can be hard to tell apart in the heat of the action. ***The Bottom Line –*** Buy or die. ★★★★★

SPELLBOUND
Psyclapse £24.99

Uppers – Well-drawn backdrops, and, erm, the packaging is nice. ***Downers –*** Almost no in-game sound, practically nothing in the way of action. ***The Bottom Line –*** Hugely boring arcade adventure thing that's overpriced by £20. ★

SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Plenty of variation, and it certainly all looks lovely. ***Downers –*** Pitifully slow, and the different sections don't really seem to gel together. ***The Bottom Line –*** If you've got a few hours to kill while you're waiting for a train, this is a game that you can load up without fear of it causing you to miss it. (On the other hand, standing on the platform might be more fun). ★★

SPOT
Leisure Genius £25.99

Uppers – Brilliantly-designed Othello-based board game which still manages to offer something new and different (and even supports up to four players). ***Downers –*** The presentation lacks polish in places. ***The Bottom Line –*** A class board-like strategy act. ★★★★★

STEEL EMPIRE
Millennium £29.99

Uppers – A decent blend of strategy and shoot-'em-up which generally works well. ***Downers –*** But boring graphics, rubbish sound and a lack of depth don't help things much. ***The Bottom Line –*** An enjoyable futuristic wargame, but a little too thin for comfort. ★★★

STELLAR 7
Dynamix (Sierra) £24.99

Uppers – Appealingly old-fashioned blast from the past in the form of (yet another!) up-dated *Battlezone.* ***Downers –*** Ever-so-slightly sluggish vector graphics and optimistic pricing. ***The Bottom Line –*** Satisfyingly mindless – but that's both a strength and a weakness. ★★

STEVE MCQUEEN WESTPHASER
Loriciels £25.99

Uppers – Almost reasonable graphics and some cute bits (it's possible to shoot the clothes off people!) ***Downers –*** Pretty hopeless shooting-gallery style gameplay. ***The Bottom Line –*** Don't even waste your time thinking about it. ★

STORMBALL
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably passable graphics. ***Downers –*** Utterly dire game design, no feeling of speed or excitement, highly confusing and largely pointless. ***The Bottom Line –*** If you're looking for a good way to waste £25, throw it down a drain rather than buy this. ★

STORM MASTER
Silmarils £25.99

Uppers – Well put together, easy to use, beautiful looking and very atmospheric multi-part *Kingdoms* variant. Need we say more? ***Downers –*** Oh, okay then. In some sections the gameplay just can't match up to the splendid effects. ***The Bottom Line –*** A mesmerising mix of slick animation, atmosphere and strategy makes for plenty of enjoyable play time. These French games sure are getting good now. ★★★★★

STRATEGO
Accolade £25.99

Uppers – An engaging strategy bash for one player at least, it adheres to the rules and appearance of the board game remarkably well. ***Downers –*** The fact that it can only be a one player game takes all the fun out of it. ***The Bottom Line –*** A fun board game which can never really work on computer. ★★

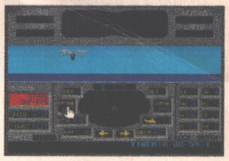
STRIKER MANAGER
D&H Games £24.99

Uppers – From the people who brought you *Football Director* (yes, that's its only good point). ***Downers –*** Statistic frenzy with absolutely no gameplay whatsoever. ***The Bottom Line –*** Could push the boundaries of computer games backwards by ten years. ★

STRIP POKER DELUXE
CDS £24.99

Uppers – Can anybody think of any? We can't. ***Downers –*** The poker game is rubbish, the graphics are flickery and all the girls are ugly anyway. ***The Bottom Line –*** If you want to see pictures of naked women there are better, cheaper and less sad ways of going about it. ★

STRIKE FLEET
Electronic Arts £29.99



Uppers – Military freaks will enjoy the number of missions and the amazing array of hardware. ***Downers –*** Discerning gamers will be disappointed by the shallow nature of the gameplay. ***The Bottom Line –*** Not really what we've come to expect from developers Lucasfilm. ★★★

SUPAPLEX
Dream Factory £25.99

Uppers – The *Boulder Dash* game style makes a comeback. ***Downers –*** But all the magic has been removed and the levels are poorly designed. ***The Bottom Line –*** There are half-a-dozen PD *Boulder Dash* games better than this. ★

SUPER SPACE INVADERS
Domark £25.99

Uppers – Brilliant intro and great sound. ***Downers –*** Incredibly slow, and closer in play to the original *Space Invaders* than the coin-op it's supposed to be a conversion of. ***The Bottom Line –*** Technically inept and extremely disappointing version of one of the year's most enjoyable arcade shoot-'em-ups. ★★

SUPER SKWEEK
Loriciel £19.99

Uppers – Cute *Defusion/Painter*-based game with power-ups and add-ons galore. ***Downers –*** Perhaps a little to French for most of us. ***The Bottom Line –*** Could do with having another fiver chopped off the price, but otherwise great fun. ★★★

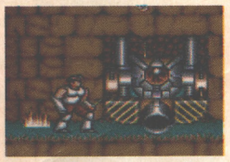
SUPER WONDER BOY
Activision £19.99

Uppers – Perfect difficulty curve lets you get just a little bit further every go. Cute graphics add to the charm and the shops where you can spend your gold give it a little extra scope. ***Downers –*** Slightly lacking in action, too slow for some. Not exactly modern looking. ***The Bottom Line –*** Great game in the *Mario* vein, but with less enemies and more depth. ★★★

SWAP
Palace £25.99

Uppers – Interesting and new idea for a puzzle game, programmed perfectly competently. ***Downers –*** It just isn't captivating, and never rises above the averageness. ***The Bottom Line –*** Fails to inspire any emotions at all. It's not good, it's not bad. It's just a bit bland. ★★

SWITCHBLADE II
Gremlin £25.99



Uppers – Gorgeous console-like graphics, tried-and-tested gameplay, packed full of detail and lovely touches. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a little too simple. ***The Bottom Line*** – Absolutely superb. Arguably the best Amiga platform game to date. ★★★★★

SWORDS AND GALLEONS
Idea £25.99

Uppers – Uses the classic trading game style to great effect. ***Downers*** – Easy to complete and the stupid omission of a save game option. ***The Bottom Line*** – A minority interest sort of affair. ★★

TANGRAM
Thalion £25.53

Uppers – Perfectly adequate computer translation of the classic Oriental puzzle. ***Downers*** – ... unfortunately it's a really dumb idea for a conversion, and the extras (time limit and suchlike) are intrusive and pointless. ***Bottom Line*** – Getting a real wooden Tangram set would be more fun, as well as much cheaper. ★

TETRIS
Infogrames £19.99

Uppers – Well, it is still *Tetris*. ***Downers*** – But it's probably the worst version yet seen on the Amiga, and that's saying something. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely stinky. (Stick with the PD versions). ★

THEIR FINEST MISSIONS
US Gold £15.99

Uppers – A handy missions disk for *Their Finest Hour*, sure to prolong game life. ***Downers*** – It's really only for lazy people who can't be bothered to construct their own missions with the editor in the original game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine, but only if you've got the original (obviously). ★★★★

THEME PARK MYSTERY
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Great feel; looks and sounds lovely. ***Downers*** – Arcade sections are fairly pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – Games which mix adventures with arcade sequences always suffer for it. ★★

THUNDER BURNER
Loriciel £19.99

Uppers – It's nice(?) to see the *Afterburner* game style make a comeback, and there's a novel VCR facility. ***Downers*** – The game is fundamentally flawed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Thoroughly disappointing rubbish with no challenge whatsoever. ★

THUNDERJAWS
Domark £25.99

Uppers – Um...some quite nice cameo screens with cute babes. ***Downers*** – Crap graphics, crap sound, no gameplay and serious bugs. ***The Bottom Line*** – A poor-to-middling coin-op turns into an appalling Amiga game. A total waste of time and money. ★

TEAM SUZUKI
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Very fast, with some pretty hairy track views. Unintentionally hilarious replay feature. ***Downers*** – Insanely sensitive to control. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enough fun to keep you playing until you can at least stay on the road for five seconds at 60mph, but a bit too unrealistic to compete with *Indy 500*. ★★★

TERMINATOR 2
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – You get exactly what you'll be expecting – Another Ocean Movie Licence With Lots Of Sub-Games And No Depth. ***Downers*** – Only one of the sub-games has any real merit of its own, and the rest are even worse than the norm for this kind of thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Pretty hopeless run-of-the-mill effort for real diehard Arnie fans only. ★★

TILT
Genias £25.99

Uppers – A good puzzle game idea. ***Downers*** – Sadly the game itself just doesn't really work. ***The Bottom Line*** – Nice try, but something just isn't right and the gameplay's not there. ★★

TIP OFF
Anco £24.99

Uppers – Decent coaching option for those so inclined. It's also rather playable as an arcade game. ***Downers*** – The control isn't as intuitive as it should be. ***The Bottom Line*** – A decent (but uninspiring) simulation of baskeball. ★★★

TOKI
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – The (latest) definitive coin-op conversion. ***Downers*** – The sound is slightly disappointing, and the game is simply too small. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is brilliant, if only there was more of it. ★★★★★

TOP BANANA
Hex £25.99

Uppers – It's got lovely psychedelic 'acid' graphics, a dance soundtrack and environmentally friendly packaging. ***Downers*** – As a game, though, *Top Banana* fails to make the grade – *Rainbow Islands* did it all a hundred times better, and without acid pix. ***The Bottom Line*** –

Scrappy and annoying. It's the Amiga's equivalant of The Word.★★

TOTAL RECALL
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A fair bit of gameplay variation. ***Downers*** – Unfriendly controls, uninspired design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Solid but unexciting. ★★

TOURNAMENT GOLF
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Authentic arcade port. ***Downers*** – Nobody ever played the arcade game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely average golfing yawnerama. ★★

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT
Domark/Incentive £49.99

Uppers – Creating your own games (or simply designing little worlds) is great fun. ***Downers*** – Well, it's not really a game as such, is it? It's pretty slow too, and making anything really worthwhile gets very complicated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Expensive and of limited appeal, but if you've always itched to create a Freescape game you can't really complain. ★★★

TURRICAN 2
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Enjoyable mindless blasting. ***Downers*** – Erm, has there been some mistake here? Someone appears to have sent us a copy of *Turrican*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Better than the original, but that's the only way in which it's different. ★★★

ULTIMA V
Origin (Mindscape) £29.99

Uppers – The scope and depth of *Ultima V* goes way beyond other role-playing adventures, even previous *Ultima* releases. ***Downers*** – Not a bit of joystick action in sight; some may find the size of the game daunting. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Ultima V* offers arguably the best in graphic fantasy (at least until *Ultima VI* comes along). ★★★★★

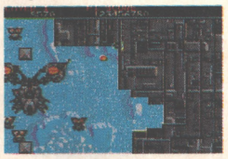
UNDER PRESSURE
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Well, if you like the look of Psygnosis games, you'll like the look of this. ***Downers*** – The execrable walk-and-shoot gameplay would bore a five-year-old. ***The Bottom Line*** – If it's supposed to be a joke, it's very funny. If it's supposed to be an enjoyable game for £26, it's a very bad joke. ★

VIDEOKID
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Great sound, varied graphics and lots of action actually make this a groovy little zapper. ***Downers*** – Not entirely new in general, but (more specifically) isn't it just a bit too much like US Gold's *Mega Twins* for comfort? ***The Bottom Line*** – A decent, colourful little blaster. Ideal for the younger shoot-'em-up fan. ★★★

VOLFIED
Empire £25.99



Uppers – *Qix* was always a brilliant game, and this extremely close coin-op conversion adds to it without overwhelming it. ***Downers*** – Limited number of screens cuts down on its potential lifespan. ***The Bottom Line*** – A classic arcade game excellently converted, but you won't be playing it forever. ★★★

UMS II
Rainbird (MicroProse) £34.99

Uppers – The pinnacle of tech-head wargames, with more user-definable bits than you could ever need. ***Downers*** – Atrocious documentation could mentally scar beginners for life. ***The Bottom Line*** – It won't win the wargaming fraternity any new members, but it'll put some in seventh heaven. ★★★

UTOPIA
Gremlin £29.99

Uppers – The appeal of this kind of city-building thing is timeless, and the war side gives it a new dimension. ***Downers*** – ...but neither side is particularly well-designed, and it can easily end up a touch on the dull side. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good game, but it needs a lot more depth to make it a true classic. ★★★★

VIZ
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Very true to the comic. ***Downers*** – Very shallow and limited. The jokes only really work the first time you see them. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun while it lasts, but after the first couple of hours you've seen all it's got to offer. ★★

WARZONE
Core Design £20.99

Uppers – Graphics have a degree of character to them, and it's pretty tough. ***Downers*** – Adds very little to the hackneyed *Ikari Warriors* format. ***The Bottom Line*** – Competent but deadly dull shoot-'em-up that you've seen a dozen times before. ★★

WHITE SHARKS
Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Exceptionally good graphics, novel 'choose-your-own-power-ups' weapon system. ***Downers*** – Too fast to have any decent feel, and incredibly unimaginative. ***The Bottom Line*** – The game that put the 'bog standard' into 'bog standard shoot-'em-up'. Duff. ★★

WILDLIFE
MD Production £19.99

Uppers – Ideologically sound. ***Downers*** – *Operation Wolf* without shooting is like swimming without water. ***The Bottom Line*** – Utterly desperate. ★

WILD WHEELS
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – Attractive presentation and competent programming make *Wild Wheels* an appealing prospect. ***Downers*** – The whole concept is remarkably shaky, and simply proves unplayable. ***The Bottom Line*** – More like *Mediocre Wheels*, really. ★★

WOLFCHILD
Core Design £25.99

Uppers – It looks good when it isn't moving too much, and the gameplay's a tried-and-trusted style. ***Downers*** – Very derivative of *Switchblade*, and the scrolling is a bit on the crude side. Most importantly though, it lacks any kind of spark. ***The Bottom Line*** – Initially quite good fun, but a rather half-hearted game. ★★★

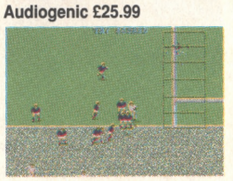
WONDERLAND
Virgin £24.95

Uppers – An evocative telling of the classic Lewis Carrol tale utilising a pretty advanced user-interface. ***Downers*** – Unless you've got a very powerful Amiga with a screen that can handle interlace, the whole thing is very unwieldy. It's not got the best parser in the world either. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but after all the hype the product is something of a let-down. Not a patch on *Monkey Island*. ★★★

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Very good copy of the coin-op (sob). ***Downers*** – Poor playability, you never get two seconds on the ball. ***The Bottom Line*** – Knocked out in the first round. ★★

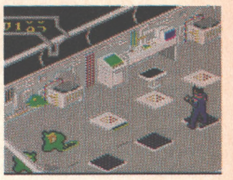
WORLD CLASS RUGBY
Audiogenic £25.99



Uppers – The most accurate and technical representation of rugby we've seen. ***Downers*** – Unfortunately, the playability suffers, and the instant appeal is lacking. ***The Bottom Line*** – It has its virtues, but it doesn't quite pull it off. ★★★

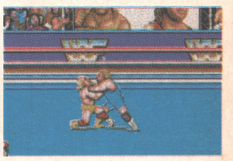
WRECKERS
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Some refreshing game ideas add a new angle to the old 'aliens-overrun-space station' story. ***Downers*** – The whole thing feels far too much like an 8-bit game – right down to the colour schemes. ***The Bottom Line*** – All the elements of a good game are there –



they just haven't been tied together properly. ★★

WWF WRESTLEMANIA
Ocean £24.99



Uppers – There aren't many, apart from the free video. ***Downers*** – There's a complete abscence of WWF's sparkle and a lack of fluid, stimulating grappling action. ***The Bottom Line*** – There's disappointment in store for grapple fans and WWF viewers alike. Come back Big Daddy, all is forgiven. ★★

XIPHOS
Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Silky smooth and pretty darn subtle. ***Downers*** – Takes far too long to get into the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only for the dedicated space trader. ★★

ZARATHRUSTA
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – The *Thrust* gameplay is timeless, and it's been updated with 1990s graphics, resulting in something very special indeed. ***Downers*** – At heart though, it's still a game that used to sell for £1.99 going for £25, which isn't a bargain in anyone's language. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but to be honest, not really very good value. ★★★

ZIRIAX
The Software Business £24.99

Uppers – Pretty *Scramble* variant. ***Downers*** – Seriously overloaded in the difficulty department. ***The Bottom Line*** – Stupidly difficult, too much for almost everyone. More suited to a budget release. ★★

ZONE WARRIOR
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Well, you don't see many games of this style anymore. ***Downers*** – But that's a bit of a blessing really. ***The Bottom Line*** – Even the programmers of this trashy arcade adventure must have been left with an empty feeling. Avoid it at all costs. ★

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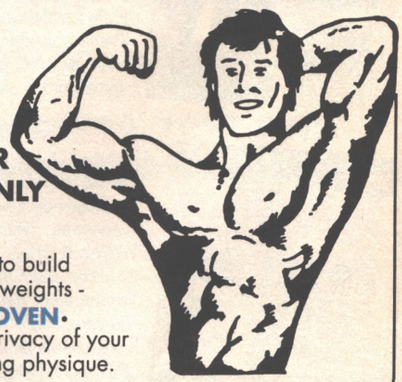

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BACK ISSUES

1 May 1991 Our very first issue! Big games like *Eye Of The Beholder, Gods* and *Cybercon III*, the first part of a gigantic *Rainbow Islands* player's guide, lots of chat from the Bitmap/Renegade crew and more!
On the disk: *Bombuzal* – the complete game!*

2 June 1991 And it just gets better! If you manage to get past the (ahem) swoony picture of Peter Molyneux on the cover you'll get to thrill to such treats as a giant Bullfrog interview and reviews of games like – yes! – *Monkey Island*!
On the disk: *Kid Gloves* – the complete game!*

3 July 1991 You want to know about Core Design? CDTV? *F-15 Strike Eagle II*? *Deuteros*? *Toki*? Then this issue is the place to come! It's even got our first 'In The Style Of...' in it!
On the disk: brilliant *Exile* special world, *Prehistorik* preview, three typically excellent PD games!*

4 August 1991 The Ultimate Autumn Preview, film games, The Assembly Line interviewed, *Jimmy White's Snooker* reviewed and more!
On the disk: *Beast Busters, The Executioner* plus three PD games! **Plus!** Giant tips poster – *Kid Gloves* and *Bombuzal* solutions!*

5 September 1991 Giant Gremlin Work In Progress feature, all the new god sims compared, DMA Design talk *Lemmings, Mega lo Mania, The Simpsons, Thunderhawk* reviewed.
On the disk: *Barbarian II* demo, plus five (five!) great PD games!*

6 October 1991 *Indy Atlantis*, and more – giant US Gold Work In Progress feature, *Midwinter II, Cruise For A Corpse, Magic Pockets* reviewed.
On the disk: *Rolling Ronny, Captain Planet, Bullfrogger* and more!
Plus! Five free AMIGA POWER postcards!*

7 November 1991 *Monkey Island II, Young Indy Jones* – Lucasfilm tell all, World Of Commodore show, Bob Jacob of Cinemaware interviewed, *Formula 1 Grand Prix, Blues Brothers, Lotus II, Robocod* reviewed...
On the disk: *Leander, Video Kid* plus PD games!*

8 December1991 All I want for Xmas... seasonal hardware guide, giant Xmas compilations feature, reviews coming out of our ears (*Populous II, First Samurai, Heimdall, MicroProse Golf, Knights Of The Sky*...)
On the disk: *Cisco Heat, Elvira Arcade*, best of PD!*

9 January 1992 Giant FRP game feature, Code Masters interviewed, our Games Of The Year, reviews of *Smash TV, Birds Of Prey, Knightmare* and more!
Double disk issue! Giant *Knights Of The Sky* entire training section, *Puggles* (great *Q-Bert*-style PD game).

10 February 1992 The Ultimate Spring Game Guide, If Graftgold had known then, the best and worst of games packaging, plus reviews of *RoboCop 3, Another World, WWF, Leander* and much, much more!
On the disk: PD Special – featuring *Mr Wobbly Leg, Raid* and *Squamble*.

11 March 1992 The new Ocean – all the year's big previews, plus Gary Bracey interviewed, *Mega lo Mania II* – diary of a game starts, buyer's guide to platform games, plus reviews of *Harlequin, John Madden, Shadowlands* and much more! **On the disk:** *Pacific Islands* exclusive mission, plus three PD games!

* *Please note issues 1 to 8 cover disks are not A500 plus compatible*

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It's the most stylish garment of the year – the all-new AMIGA POWER long-sleeved T-shirt. It's black, it's cotton, it's got the AMIGA POWER logo on the front and the word 'ATTITUDE' down one arm (for some reason). And it's brill – the fashion item you can wear to the beach, the pub, anywhere! One Extra Large size fits all!

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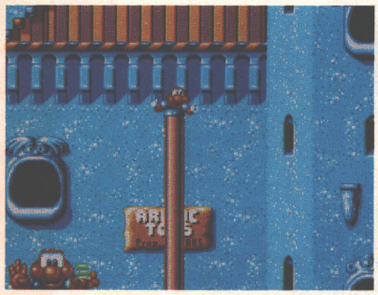

ROBOCOD

Many slick, fast arcade games are judged against the best 16-bit console stuff – *Robocod* is one that can actually stand such comparisons. Hilarious, original, superbly crafted, and if not quite as fast as *Sonic The Hedgehog, pretty* damn close, this is quite simply one of the best Amiga fun products of the past year. Superb!

AP rated 87 percent.

OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS!

The stand-alone, you-don't-need-the-original-game-to-play-it, version of Psygnosis' *Lemmings* almost-sequel. It's the same superb game design as the original – just more of it! As an (expensive) data disk it earned 82 percent – this one would have rated far more.

AP rated (at least) 82 percent.

CELTIC LEGENDS

'Celtic' like the Northern European race, not 'Celtic' like the football team, this stunning strategy/action/role-playing game has proved a shock hit in the AMIGA POWER offices – fans of the *Chaos*-style of gameplay will love it! Especially fun in two-player mode, this unusual hex-based game with arcade dynamics is gorgeous, atmospheric and fun!

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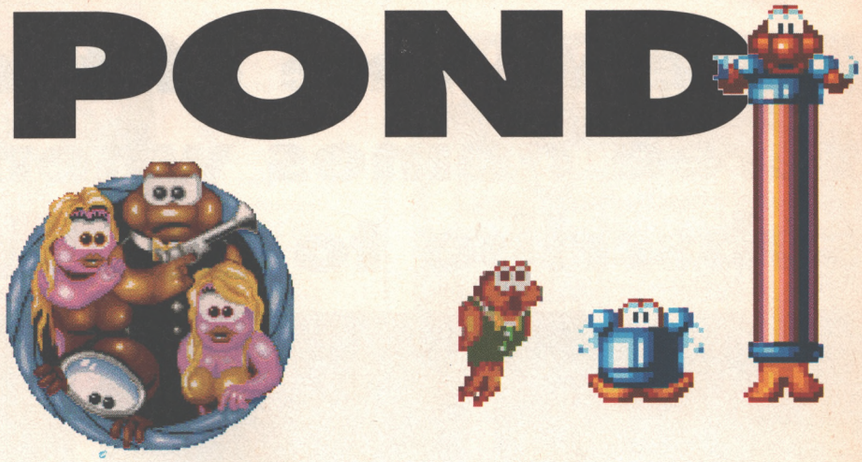
JAMES POND



This month our guide to Amiga game characters deals with a certain fishy secret agent...

JAMES POND

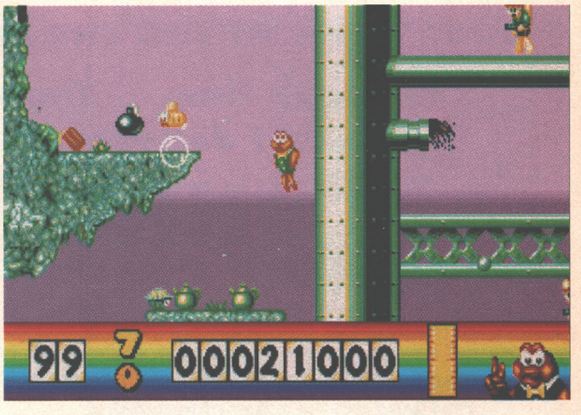
FULL NAME James Pond.
RACE Fish of unknown breed, probably cod. (If so, he's probably a young cod, lacking noticeable barbels or other cod-like features.)
OCCUPATION Hero, Special Underwater Agent of F.I.5.H. (the Fishy Secret Service).
ALSO KNOWN AS Double Bubble Seven (code number); Robocod.
LEGAL STATUS As far as the majority of human citizens of the United Kingdom are concerned, Pond is simply a wild fish, and as such has no legal status. However, as an operative of His Majesty's (ie Neptune's?) Secret Service, Pond is a full citizen of the fish world.
MARITAL STATUS Not revealed.
KNOWN RELATIVES AND ASSOCIATES 'F', the head of F.I.5.H. (never seen); other F.I.5.H. agents (presumably).
GROUP AFFILIATIONS F.I.5.H.
VEHICLE It's never seen, but Pond is said to drive a 'Turbo Tub'.
BASE OF OPERATIONS F.I.5.H. headquarters; James Pond's house (situated inside a wrecked ship, exact location unknown).
FIRST APPEARANCE *James Pond – Underwater Agent.*
HISTORY James Pond first appeared in the game *James Pond – Underwater Agent*. In it Pond, a fish version of the well known British secret agent, undertook a series of missions, each with an environmental slant. In one mission Pond had to blow up a leaking oil platform, in another he had to rescue seals from 'vicious eskimo dwarves.' The baddie behind some, though not all, of these environmental catastrophies was the evil Doctor Maybe, who planned to "hold the world's leaders to ransom with toxic waste plants... strategically placed around the globe to pump poison into the sea."

Maybe returned to threaten the world in *James Pond 2 – Robocod*. This time the evil scientist had taken over the North Pole toy factory of one Mr S Claus, and James Pond was sent in to save, amongst other things, Christmas.
HEIGHT As Pond, in the region of two feet tall. When equipped with the Robocod Expandosuit, however, Pond can stretch to a height of approximately 100 feet.
WEIGHT Unknown, likely to be in the region of 24 lb.
COLOUR Orange.
EYES Large and white with black pupils.
HAIR None.
STRENGTH LEVEL As James Pond, normal piscine strength for a young fish of his size and weight who indulges in regular exercise. As Robocod, Pond enjoys an increased strength level.
KNOWN ABILITIES James Pond, despite being a secret agent, doesn't carry a gun. Instead his weapons are bubbles – enemies trapped in them by Pond can be popped to create bonus awards. Other abilities included picking things up and jumping out of the water. Despite being a fish, Pond can survive in the air for short periods.

As Robocod, however, Pond has a number of new abilities, chief of which is that he can breathe air for extended periods (the entire game takes place on dry land). The lack of water means no more bubbles, but to compensate for this his Robocod Expandosuit allows him to stretch to many times his normal height, useful for climbing to high ledges, or squashing meanies when he lands on them.
NEXT APPEARANCE James Pond was rumoured to appear in *James Pond 3 – Death Fish*, but this will no longer happen. "Too depressing," say publishers Millennium. Instead there will now be two new Pond adventures this year. One is "a surprise", but the main one, scheduled for November is (get this) *James Pond 3 – Splash Gordon*!

Above, left to right: James and the 'Pond girls' from the intro screen of his first game, *James Pond – Underwater Agent*; Pond in normal fish mode; Pond in 'Robocod' mode, both non-extended and extended.

Left: James Pond's house, as seen in the first game. Note the satellite dish, but lack of 'Turbo Tub' car – perhaps he's parked it in the garage around the back?



Right: James Pond swimming around the base of a leaking oil platform in a scene from the third level of *James Pond – Underwater Agent*. To the left of the screen you can see a series of collectables – including the dynamite Pond will need to destroy the platform – and to the right a frogman baddie. Note James Pond's dress – a dinner jacket a la 007 – and unusual upright mode of swimming. One thing is quite clear – this is no ordinary fish!

Left: James Pond in non-extended mode from the game *Robocod*. Here he is running along the top of a speeding train in a fairly untypical scene. Why untypical? Well, here the game scrolls horizontally only, there are no platforms – which he would normally access with his 'Robocod Expandosuit' – in sight.

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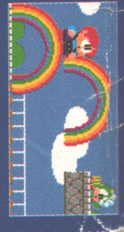

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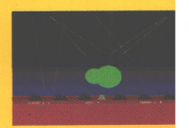

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